


THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

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Dedication

To spend the best part of three months in the Hebrew original of Proverbs is to be indelibly impressed by the spirituality of the book. Whilst Solomon was recognised as a "preacher" or "teacher" whose material you can peruse in the book of Ecclesiastes, the most penetrating spiritual truths and his closest approach to the good news, covenant mercy, faith and evangelism and all the implications of spirituality as we know it are contained in his "Proverbs". I trust the reader enjoys this work and send it on its way with these words, "That He Who is Greater than Solomon may be glorified-even Jesus-who is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Honour & Glory to the Lamb!

Bob Coffey (Amamaic Bible Companion)

INTRODUCTION

Russian Collector of Proverbs

Several years ago my wife and I had the pleasant privilege working alongside our church in New Cumnock, Ayrshire to host several visiting groups of church leader's interpreters and children from Belarus. Among those we hosted was Susanna Kyckobekar who had taught English in Russian Academies and who authored a handbook containing 1106 Russian proverbs and their English equivalents. Here are a few examples:

**Profits and losses walk in the same shoes: If he is asked to pray he will bruise his forehead;
The highest branch is not the safest roost; adversity makes a man wise not rich: Don't take your
harp to the party**

I make the reference because if it were possible to prove a connection between the excellence of one's character and familiarising oneself with wisdom in the form of Proverbs Susanna was living proof of such a connection.

Carrion in 14thC Spain endeavoured to build a comprehensive moral system on common proverbs-but it proved to be full of contradictions. It is one of the highest tributes to Solomon's wisdom that he succeeded in this task largely avoiding the relativity of Ethics.

Great Historical collections

Besides the "supreme" work of Solomon which excels by its sheer sage spiritual didactic we stand in the debt of many other collectors of proverbial matter. Erasmus, for instance, in his second collection of ADAGIA had 3,260 entries in his 1508 Venice edition. Four centuries later Lean gave 50 years to harvesting a huge stack of proverbs which were published in 1902. It may be of interest that Belvoir Castle within the bounds of our own Leicestershire houses an art piece by the Flemish artist David Teniers (fl 1640's) which illustrates 45 Dutch Proverbs.

An esteemed British collection

Linda and Roger Flavell have produced a dictionary of "Proverbs and their origins" in which they provide a series of definitions of what a Proverb is. The Flavells have produced a first rate title extremely well researched and representing a breadth of learning. They have set out over 400 popular proverbs in an easy to read alphabetical style. Anyway, narrowly avoiding a book review let me return to my task -which is to present cogent quotations on the meaning of "a Proverb". Let us give pride of place to the Oxford Dictionary definition which is, "a short pithy saying in common and recognized use". You might now enjoy comparing alternative descriptions of "the proverb" as "a brief epigrammatic saying that is a popular byword"(Webster) or "the philosophy of the common people"(Aristotle) or "much matter decocted into few words"(Thomas Fuller) or "notable measures and directions for human life"(William Penn) or as "few words, good sense, and a fine image (Moses Ibn Ezra). I like best the description found in Cervantes Don Quixote which runs, "proverbs are short sentences drawn from long experience"

A guide to preachers

The work I have attempted with the LORD'S help is a faithful re-translation from the Hebrew with pertinent comments. I would draw the attention of those who like myself seek the systematic

within the serendipitous to the following sections of the book which are eminently suited to the preacher's craft.

TOPICS FOR PREACHERS

The Purpose of Proverbs 1.11-7
Sinful company & the spiritual call 1. 10-33
Three Covenants 3 5-10
Fearing God without being frightened 3.11-18
Solomon's window at twilight 7.6-9 (contextualises warnings)
Wisdom's extraordinary exemplar Chapter 8
The seven pillars of wisdom Chapter 9
Proverbs and the Heart Chapter 15
Proverbs & the place of Scripture Chapter 16
Proverbs as it relates to evangelism 22. 17
A Preacher's delight 24 23-34
Proverbs & Revival 25 1-15
Agur's 4 Theological questions 30.4
Agur on persistence 30 18-19
Agur's gospel 30 24-28
Agur and Victory 30 29-31

PROVERBS 1

The proverbs of Solomon
SECTION 1 1.1-9.18

Proverbs is written in a distinct style which Solomon adapted and perfected probably from David. The "hemistich" occurs where two pithy statements stand alongside to form a "verse" in our translation. So if you can imagine it a page of such hemistich sayings has a parting straight down the middle from top to bottom. The Proverbs are both philosophical-adopting acute thought provoking expressions and also philological-using "words" to promote spiritual meditation.

James M Gray in his 1952 "Spire Commentary" says, "In the millennial kingdom, doubtless, it will constitute with a portion of Leviticus and the Sermon on the mount the basis of the laws governing the citizens. So this book set in a theocracy has massive future potential. Coleridge called it, "A statesman's manual" and Dean Stanley termed it, "The philosophy of the practical life". Oesterley calls it "a manual of sanctified common sense". I would term it "Spiritual teaching with a sharp practical edge"

Alongside prophets and priests in Israel there were Chakamim or sages who were also Sepherim or writers. They wrote copies of the nation's wisdom for distribution and preserved such collections. They are mentioned in Isa 29.14 and Jeremiah 18.18

Stylistically the book contains (a) Synonymous lines (b) Antithetical lines (c) Synthetic lines (d) Parabolic lines within its Hebrew poetic parallelism.

I would encourage the reader to go directly to Proverbs 21: 1-11 to get some appreciation of the huge purpose of Solomon-to inveigh into the Hebrew language by proverbs that tripped off every tongue a new living spirituality. The fact that the book was at least in part set to work during the Reformation under Hezekiah (cf Prov.25.1) through the creation of copies and their distribution shows the considerable worth of teaching memorised scripture and encouraging its percolation into every walk of life for the betterment of society. Its re-emergence in the millennium is scarcely to be doubted.

Proverbs of Solomon, Son of David...

King of Israel

*The word "proverb" (Hebrew *lcm* comes from a verb meaning "to make like" or "to rule" which words link as the basic significance of *hmd* "to think" or "to form an opinion" and *m[m* "to judge" or "to rule". We could say, for instance, that "becoming like Jesus" is "to accept the rule of Jesus". I suggest also*

that Christ as king adopted this proverb-cum-parable method of teaching as He sought to strengthen in us His patterns of life and thought. In John 10.6 & 16.25 the Greek equivalent of the word παροιμια is spoken of as a "parable" and in 2Peter 2.29 "proverb". My assertion then is that it is the teaching method of a king or ruler and as such is used by Job David Solomon and Jesus.)

The four purposes of these writings

(1) 1-2

To know "wisdom" and "instruction" to perceive the words of "understanding"
To personally experience mkj "practical wisdom" or "skill"-which is first in God, then kings and pious ones.(Zophar in Job 11 5-6 defines mkj as "complex" or "double folded" "life" as to existence(i.e. Living God ward as well as man ward-suited to the "second birth" concept; a second interpretation makes it "an aid to standing" cf Joshua, "whom God raised up", and thirdly "heart wisdom" enjoyed by artificers like Bezaleel, people made" wise by the Holy Spirit"-so the new life of God, divine aid sourcing in the Captain of salvation and skill granted by the Holy Spirit sums up what wisdom is.) and rsm "separation of oneself". The parallel saying expands the thought, "to develop enlightening words of understanding or mediation". The book has a grand plan-to help us stand right with God and separate ourselves to Him and to have the help of a mediator or umpire in our thoughts so that we might also see differences and make right choices.

(2) 3

To receive "separation" and "Jacob prudence" Righteousness, divine judgement, evenness/tranquillity

We need context for this spray of Hebrew words. Let us take the first rsm as found Job 12.18 "He overrules the discipline of kings"-so it is about "bonds" hence the duty to receive" correction" in the family. The second lkv is illustrated in Genesis 48.14 where Jacob moved his hands prudently. The third qdx is the benignity or righteousness (we say "mercy") that holds the scales of judgement (Jeremiah 11.20) or which brings deliverance or liberty as Cyrus did to captive Israel Isa. 45.13. The fourth fpvm is setting up right and then governing in peace as Shiloh will do Ezekiel 21.27-so the beginning of a steady state of "being right and happy". The fifth is myrsm or "straightnesses" or even "straightly" meaning "pleasing to God" or "right in His eyes" ;In Judges 17.6 everyone did what was pleasing to them but not approved or given the immediate "go ahead" by God. All these are "received" as gifts. The person who was given wisdom believes that separation; prudence; liberty; being made right with God and a life that pleases God are all given by God in grace.

(3) 4-5

To give subtlety to the simple Acquaintance and purpose to the youth

Solomon looks at young people with carefulness. He wants them to have [dy "personal experience" of God cf. Exodus 6.7 Ruth 3.3 Isa1.3 and to have hmz a good and set "purpose" for their lives. and his father David was a man of just such firm purpose cf. Psalm 17.3 & 27.4. Increase of learning is now addressed -under the same head

A wise person will listen and add to learning one who understands himself will obtain binding agreements

(a)The importance of listening lies behind the establishment of lectureships. We learn as we listen to mentors. It is thus that we are to increase our stock of knowledge. It is compared to "taking a wife" or winning booty in war". There are truths and facts and principles we shall love all our lives-and they don't come without persistence and struggle.

(b)It is vital to recognise one's need of others. So a man who has personal understanding will establish and keep covenant with God and with men or seek pledges against money lent.

(4) 6-7

To understand a proverbial thinking and what needs interpretation; the words of the wise and their knots

The scriptures exist to bring a "man of understanding" -both a mediator and umpire to assist us in the words of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit. The spiritual oracles and the knotty wisdom of the wise are ours by the inspiration of the Lord the Spirit. Solomon plays a part in training the man of God to depend on these helps in scripture.

The fear of the LORD is the beginnings of His acquaintance Fools despise wisdom and separation to God

In Proverbs 31.30 we read "a woman that fears the LORD is to be honoured". Fear any first appears in Gen3.10. It has to do with sin and conscience and when sin is acknowledged a true relationship with God opens up to the soul. It is foolish to reject the threefold provision of wisdom (see above section in dark italics)

Obedience 8-9

My Son, hear the admonition of your father Do not forsake the law of your mother

The Father's bonds of discipline and the mother's doctrine are both vital. Obedience to Father's warning is the last issue as the sweet teaching of mother is the first training of the soul. We must heed gentle teaching and loving discipline.

For they will be twisted wreaths on your head and adornments of grace around your neck

The "wreath" ׀ל gives us the word Levi and Levite which family as it was set apart was the "crown" or glory of the people.

The "adornments" are as floral wreaths with which dignitaries are greeted. Solomon is saying that the future of obedience is that it will bring both religious and social appreciation. People who learn discipline can lead others.

Sinful Company 10-19

My son if sinners keep *enticing* you do not go

However persistent seducers may be do not move in that direction. Indeed avoid their company

If they say "go with us" "We will make an ambush to kill"

The danger of awful sin and lifelong consequences follows upon one wrong decision

"Let us lie in wait for the innocent freely or without cause Let us lie in wait for blood"

The secrecy of ill deeds soon reveals Satan "The murderer from the beginning" as its true father.

"Let us conceal ourselves from the innocent gratuitously and swallow lives like Sheol

"And completely as those who go down to the pit...We shall find plenty of all sorts of treasure

"We shall fill our houses with loot ...Allow your *bridal price* to fall among us.

Let there be *one purse to be spent* for us all" ...My Son do not go in their way

Keep your foot from their beaten path for their feet run to evil

And they are rash to shed blood...For the net is spread for nothing

In the sight of every bird on the wing or *husband who protects*...And for nothing they lie in wait for blood

**They hide themselves endangering their own souls...This is the public path of plunder /brokenness
It marries the soul of *its husband***

Solomon has a number of marital images strewn in his warnings against the wicked. Sin begins with enticement. It offers mutual inheritance and purse. It shows how the soul must be sold to wickedness as a bride is sold. Above the plans of the wicked is the "protective husband" who is like God. To resort to a wicked life is to marry brokenness

The Spiritual call 20-23

Wisdom calls joyously outside her house... In the public squares she gives her proclamation

Amongst the big disquieted crowds she calls others to her (by name)...At the opening of the city gates she speaks light

How long you who are easily enticed will you love folly...For mockers love their frivolous contempt

And fools or the impious hate intimacy (with God)...Turn at my correction or argument

Behold I will cause my Spirit to gush upon you as a stream...I will make my oracles intimately known to you

Here is the preacher in Solomon. Wisdom like the clarion of a prophet speaking at the principal feasts is calling. It seeks the individual in the crowd who will open his/her heart to intimacy with God. Here "repentance" and the willingness to experience the inrush of the life of the spirit and the certainty of the word of God is spelt out plainly.

Because I have called and you have ceased to listen ...I have stretched out my hand and none has been attentive

**Because you let go my counsel as reins...And you did not breathe after my rebuke
I also will laugh or smile in the house of your trouble burden or ruin...And speak in another language when your fear comes**

When your terror comes like a house crashes down (Heb q[| not nxl "to mock") and your troublesome burdens happen to you as a hurricane that carries you away

When distressing enemy Zara and a besieging oppressor Zoq come in...Then they will call & I will not answer

They will seek me in the morning early and not find me...They have broken down because they hated intimacy (with me)

They did not choose the fear of the LORD...They did not breathe after my decree or prediction

**They insulted/blasphemed (Heb חאן) all my rebuke...They will eat the fruit of their ways
They will Sabbath on or be filled with their "commands" (Heb x[y]...For the apostasy of the easily enticed fools (like Orion the pious giant bound to the sky) will slay them**

And the carelessness of the impious fools will destroy them...And who listens to me will abide in confidence or faith and He will live tranquil or peaceful (Heb נאב) from fear of evil

The consequences of failure to listen to God and His word are that the nation would experience her house crashing and God would turn away and speak to the Gentiles as we now know. Other remarkable consequences here foretold in poetry is concentration on the law or "commands" thereafter instead of the work of the Spirit, no answer to prayer and terror. The obedient find their peace as ever by faith in the LORD.

PROVERBS 2

The three "if's" 1-9

1. My son if you take my word... and will lay up my commands as treasure with you

(Hebrew j q| is used of "taking" or "possessing" as one's own; taking a city or a wife are instances of its use) (this) belongs to sharpening your ear for spiritual wisdom...Stretch out for understanding for your heart The Hebrew for "stretch out" [fn means to "extend a tent". This is like having a "mediator" in the tent of our lives-making room for the counsel of the LORD.

2. For if you cry for understanding...and pray for prudence

One of Caleb's nephews was called "prudence" 1 Chron 2.25. hnyb and hmb Binah and Bunah are "understanding" and "prudence". Understanding comes as a result of an outcry with weeping and prudence with a prayer (cf Isa 65 where "spreading the hands" to God is associated with such a "cry". The virtues or gifts are related to the same root word which means "to discern" "umpire" mediate" but they differ in that the first is decisive, the second patient and careful)

3. If you seek her as silver...and dig the earth for her as for underground stores

*The quest of this mediated wisdom has to be serious. Wisdom is precious-and not easily obtained
Then you will understand the fear of the LORD...and the personal experience of God*

The two-fold application of wisdom (a) To avoidance of subversives 10-15

For the LORD gives wisdom... from His mouth come the power to experience first hand and mediation

Solomon is speaking of the beginnings; of "Knowing God" J.I Packer style; of the burden of sin lifted. of the work of mkj which is the "triune" work of God's new life in the soul; of the captain of salvation together with the skill/inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It all comes from His "mouth" or his WORD and the MEDIATOR. This by gospel standards ticks all the boxes.

He lays up in store "setting upright" for the just...He is a shield to those who walk complete

God has in his heart a destiny and secret of giving "being" and "justification" to those of the straight way. The living truth and the legal reality merge here in God's gift to those who take the "straight and narrow way". Jesus said this way "leads to life". Solomon knew that God figured to be the "Shield" of Abraham. Abraham walked "complete" The expression Solomon uses combines Genesis 15.1 & 17.1

"the shield" chapter and the "walk perfect" chapter. It is important to state and to remember this reference and to realise that Solomon like Paul was a student of Genesis 15 and 17 -of justification by substitution and of sanctification or likeness to the LORD

To defend the public path of defending the right...He will watch the personal path of His pious ones

Then you will understand righteousness and "defence" ...and the just ones the entire path or hastening of the good.

THE DEFENCE OF PUBLIC GOOD AND THE LIFE OF HIS SAINTS IS GOD'S UNDERTAKING IN A THEOCRACY. The wise skilful pious one is an umpire in the public domain and is committed to the forwarding of the ultimate good. This is a level of interaction open to the righteous

For wisdom will enter your heart andand intimacy (with God) will sweeten your soul

Here Solomon is writing in the vein of his canticle-and the allusion is to a wife coming in and taking charge of a home and sweetening by her presence the atmosphere and ambience of domestic life. So the LORD in his management of our affairs and by His presence makes a wholesale change in our living by His coming into the heart.

Meditation shall keep watch over you...prudence shall defend you

The idea here is murmuring to one's soul but in the sense of meditation. Cf. Psalm 4.4. The LORD has set apart the holy for Himself, meditate upon your bed and be still". Prudence shall defend (Hebrew רָחַן) the life of the wise as a wall keeps the foxes from a vineyard. The world the flesh and the devil find intrusion hard where there is Mediating prudence-or prudence coming from the Mediator (Hebrew חַמְבָּ from חַב)

To snatch you from the way of evil....from the man of the path of changes or revolution

In the theocracy to "change" was to overturn the godly state. Democracies are ever changing. They are as uncertain as their succeeding and often maverick leaders to agree on what principles are best. The theocracy directed prophetically as was latterly the case where it operated on the principles here developed by Solomon would foster stability. We see this under David and Nathan, and indeed Solomon-where the king was in himself a prophet; we see it again in Hezekiah and Isaiah and in Josiah and Huldah-cum-Hilkiah.

From those who desert the public paths of tranquillity ...to walk in the personally chosen ways of darkness

There are people who will not return to ordered society. They have cast the die in favour of "darkness". In Psalm 88.13 "darkness" is used of Sheol. Ultimately darkness is a denial of light as the counsel of Satan denies the truth of Christ.

Who shine in the execution of evil and dance a jig when things change for the worse.

The perverted pleasure of the wicked takes joy in the turmoil and downgrade in social life

Whose public ways are fraudulent or legally perverse...who are bent in their "rushing about" or "revolution"

The wicked strive illegally and they are like the Almond tree they are "early awakeners" but "bent"

(b) To avoidance of seducers vv 16-22

To snatch you from the woman who searches or spies and spreads news...from one who feigns being a stranger speaking her smooth words *The seductress is presented as one who "winnows" for what she wants. A like danger is the flattering woman who presents in a disguise like Tamar.*

Who deserts the familiar of her youth...and forgets the covenant of her God

Solomon warns against women who break from their early yoke-fellow (Hebrew פֶּלֶא of an ox and learning the ways of another ox under the same yoke) and leaves the covenant of her God-like the forgotten "sheaf" of Deut 24.19)

For her house bows down to death...and her public paths to the Rephaim

The latter were the rump of Satan's incursion(s) among mankind by the intercourse of Angels and women. There is a deep spiritual danger lurking here which begins with disrespect for yoke, forsaking of God and finishes with involvement with Satan

Any who go to her do not return... and they do not attain the public path of those who live God's life (the living ones)

The finality of failure in this area is part and parcel of Solomon's warning. To slide this way is to compromise one's eternal destiny.

Therefore walk in the way of good men...and keep the public paths of the righteous

For the tranquil will dwell in the land..and the perfect or whole will be pre-eminent in it

The rewards of an upright walk are undisturbed residence and living to develop and excel in the land.

But the wicked will be cut off ...and the men of treachery and rapine will be plucked up

The wicked are subject to being cut off as by sword and to being uprooted like plants. They have in the theocracy no permanent hope. Stability and righteousness go together.

PROVERBS 3

Proverbs and "a second" life 1-2

My Son you will not forget my Torah *i.e. "wander from my finger pointers Hebrew ytrwt...and it will preserve my commands for your heart* *The ultimate object of Torah is Messiah-to whom scripture points.*

For length of days and change or "repeatings" of life *i.e. "a second life"(cf Eternal life)...and peace they will develop for you*

The one thing Solomon points up is scriptural wisdom and by that means his commands are commended. Scripture offers from the fourth command-longevity; New Life by repentance and peace or "soundness" "finishing the building of life" and "friendship with God" and "reward" or "prosperity"

The best field partners 3-4

Covenant love and truth will not forsake you

Mercy dsj and Truth tma are essential to living right and making good decisions. The first is love and kindness and ardour that make a covenant at its own gross expense; the second is probity firmness faithfulness justice consistency on promises. Where these two are practiced in a god-fearing life there is fruit. They are like two oxen ploughing-while they hold together so much good work can be done. But agreements without consistency and justice without kindness bring by no means the same harvest.

...Join them on your neck... *where "chains of office hang" and ornaments are worthily worn there will be justice and mercy. Write them on the tables of your heart...and your will find grace and prudence in the eyes of God & man* *the "tables of the heart" as in 2 Corinthians 3.3 $\delta\epsilon\lambda\tau\omicron\iota$ $\phi\rho\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu$ fit together well and if we have "made a covenant" with the LORD then we will show mercy to our fellows. The original tablets were broken but these are linked for ever with "grace" and prudence"(which can mean 'success' or 'doctrinal discourse')*

Solomon knows God will honour His covenant (cf "The sure mercies of David Psalm 107.43) and his faithfulness is sure. God will not divorce us but we need to demonstrate that we belong to the Lord and that he has given us these ornaments. Divine grace and set purpose are to remain like the second law on the tablets of our hearts.

Three ways to keep covenant 5-10

1. SET YOUR HOPE IN THE DIRECTION OF OR "TRUST IN" THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART...AND DO NOT LEAN ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING.

The idea is "Don't try to be your own minister" for your heart. God alone can understand direct and cleanse the heart.

2. EXPERIENCE THE LORD IN ALL YOUR PERSONAL WAYS... AND HE WILL MAKE YOUR PUBLIC PATHS TRANQUIL

Do not become wise in your own eyes...Fear the LORD and turn away from evil

Experiencing God means prayer and study of His word. Personal ways affect public service. Don't be your "Doyen". Solomon is warning against such a trap as Saul falls into by consulting evil spirits (1 Samuel 28.3)

It will be "healths" or "recovery" to your stomach nerves...and moistening or marrow to your bones *before current medicine Solomon has touched upon the lower or automatic nervous system and also on the vital role played by bone marrow in the blood. An experience of the lord and a prayerful life has a salutary effect on routine health.*

3. HONOUR THE LORD FROM YOUR COMFORTABLE CIRCUMSTANCES (*Hebrew מלח "easy circumstances".*) This is not "giving to the king" but "giving to God" that Solomon is emphatic about. **...and the first of all that comes to you Honour the LORD with the "first things" that "come" to you i.e. with all your "first things" or accomplishments.**

And your underground storehouses will rest ... your reservoirs of new wine will overflow

Both wheat and wine stores were underground in those days. The first will remain unused so abundant is the crop. The second will "be redundant". Solomon is saying -that good circumstances are those in which your stores would last without your harvest. They needn't be touched.

God's love & discipline were both seen in Solomon's ancestry. 11-18

Do not be frightened by the LORD!

My son do not melt at the discipline of the LORD...do not be frightened at His rebuke

Don't melt away from things of faith or reject them; don't fear when you wake up to his argument in conscience or rebuke. God is very direct yet he delights in his "Davids". . Do not be aroused as out of a dream like Jacob beholding the staircase to heaven or Pharaoh viewing the fat and lean cattle.

For whom the LORD loves He rebukes...as a Father the son in whom he takes pleasure

God inclines to His children, delights in them, counts them friends. His delight is in the "association" and the gifts exemplified. Naomi and Elkanah were loved of God-though they left the Promised Land.

Happy is the man who discovers spiritual wisdom...who obtains understanding from another or gives it to another

Adam was "happy" in finding "Eve" Genesis (2.20)

*(Hebrew *קִיַּם* which can mean "to be an arbiter or mediator" for someone or "gain the mediatorial help of another as to gain comprehension-it can also have both significances. One is tempted to see Boaz and Ruth in this happy combination of spiritual new life -exchanging wisdom)*

The wealth resulting from her merchandise is better than a profit of silver... and her coming than gorgeous gold

Literally the merchandise of wisdom is better than travelling with silver or hoarding up gold.

Solomon is encouraging his readers to trade in wisdom-to communicate the faith!

She is scarcer than rubies... and all you could desire is not comparable to her. *The return of Naomi creates a sensation and the love story of Ruth and Boaz is a ruby tale. The ruby gemstone speaks of desire and the passion of human love-but the wisdom of Boaz and Ruth by its regenerating power, covenant commitment and skill under God's guidance enriched it far more*

Length of days is in her right hand...

We may say that the right hand shows the blessings in this life and the Samuel hand (the covered or hidden hand-given as a pledge of promises-so the blessings prophesied of the life to come. This is the fundamental reason why Solomon hails "wisdom". So here the process of discipline leads through life to the best -to long days-and to the Glory that follows. Naomi found little Obed the nourisher of her" old age")... in her left happiness and glory. In her "covered hand" of the future is a "build up of happiness" as opposed to a " build up of gold"

Her ways are sweet and "Naomi" like... and where she treads is peace assurance prosperity.

Here "raised highways" in the desert are roads where you will meet others and speak "peace" -a beautiful event apropos this case is the meeting in NT times of Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch. Even the hard days did not change the heart of Naomi-she was wise and liberal and kind. Her mood was sombre and she passed through bitter experience but she saw prosperity rebuilt. Solomon may have been thinking back to his wise great-great-great grandmother

She is a tree of lives to those who are bound constant confirmed urgent upon her

...Happy are those who hold fast to her *There can be little doubt but that Solomon has Ruth-his great-great grandmother in mind.*

Ruth "bound her hand" to Naomi who was spiritually wise. She took the way of life.

The earth's spiritual foundation 19-20

The LORD in the house of wisdom founded the earth...the heavens He Himself has constantly established in the house of understanding. *The Hebrew "founded" is *dsj* which speaks of a*

"foundation stone". Earth was not just made as a scientific experiment. God laid the stone and engraved it. It was a "wisdom" or "salvation" stone and carried the writ of the creator that this planet was to be one with "salvation history" with the elements of "regeneration" "covenant love" and skilful guidance" involving the entire trinity. The mighty rock plates that interlock in the earth were laid by the LORD and the heavens were prepared or "Aimed" by the LORD. The planet is the preserve of the triune God. In Job 8.8 we have reference to "the first generation" and "the former age".

In the house of his personal awareness the depths boiled out...the dust clouds were dropping light rain. "By His knowledge the depths divide themselves up". There was a period of great unsettlement and then a time of steady abundant fruitfulness. In psalm 65.12 "fatness" is linked to a "visitation" of God. God watched over the commotion of the earth in the days of the deluge to bring in circumstances of renewed fruitfulness. Fruitfulness is fostered by the turmoil of change!

Ten Things not to do 21-31

1. My son be as a city watchman as to calm and level mind and meditated purpose...let them not leave your eyes.

Keep "green" and verdant and "sprouting" "level headedness" and "calm compensation of mind" and "personal private meditation"(Hebrew *hvj hmzm mzm*) do not allow them to grow away from you -like the almond tree leaning the other way. Holding to a firm purpose and keeping a constant attitude are vital to living right

They will be life to your soul... and grace to your neck

2. Then you will walk secure in your path and your foot will not be injured Hebrew *pgn* Here is something that casts light on the quotation that Satan uses from Psalm 91.12 in Matthew 4.6. There has to be meditation of scripture and right purpose with a calm not sinister scheming mind in the person who avoids injury. No rushing -much meditation.

3. When you lie down you will not fear You will not "tremble" Hebrew *dhp* (literally "curve up in your bed")...also when you lie down in the evening of your change of garment. This means that there are two "lying downs"-the first on earth-the second heavenly. Both will be sweet. Both involve change of garments and they are secure for the purposeful saint who lives with quiet trust.

4. Do not fear the one who or that which causes sudden accident...and the crash of the wicked for it will come. The word *matp* signals a house crash of the nature that Jesus spoke of in his story about two houses. As No.10 shows Solomon also speaks about two houses

For the LORD will be in the house of your confidence... Hebrew *l sk* "inward strength" or "loins" ...and keep your foot from being caught

5. Do not restrain good from the husband of good...when it is in your hand to do it

Hebrew [*mm* "do not bolt out" others from the good they deserve as the husband deserves the provision of the wife

Literally 'Do not "dam up" good'...'do not restrain the flood tide of good'. So we are encouraged to "bring rivers of blessing" to our friends and society. Deferred good is sin. It is like keeping a husband and wife apart.

6. Do not say to your neighbour, "Go and return"... "Tomorrow I will give you" when I have wealth We have no promise that tomorrow will give like opportunity. Financial obligations are to be undertaken promptly

7. Do not devise evil against your neighbour...who lives trustfully beside you Hebrew *vrj* meaning 'do not by magic art or a sharp tongue devise evil against your neighbour or "do not plough in the seeds of evil against your neighbour (the one close to you who trusts in you) "Love your neighbour as yourself" -the element of trust can forward matters of faith

8. Do not strive with a man gratuitously... if he has done you no wrong literally" do not rashly or gratuitously" quarrel with your neighbour if he has not brought camel loads of evil to you! Solomon is putting in place the safeguards of a peaceful society

9. Do not be hot or angry with a man of violence... The man of "oppression" Hebrew *sm* "the rebel" "the oppressor".

10. Do not choose any of his ways Literally "Do not buy his ways" or "Don't model yourself" on the way he does things.

God's cushion 32-35

For the perverse is an abhorrence to the LORD... and his secret is with the tranquil *literally "his cushion" -the place where He sits is where He invites the righteous to sit...It is His place of familiarity-his place of familiar converse" where He consults and takes secret counsel or reveals that counsel to His beloved.*

The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked *(Satan and those who deceive) Genesis 3.14...and the rest of the righteous He blesses that is -where the righteous sits-his house and pasture.*
If He scorns the scorers ...Those who mock the sacred He mocks *(cf Proverbs 1.26) The LORD is the "judge of all" He gives grace to the humble(or)the afflicted. Naomi in the line of David found grace and her daughter in law Ruth in her affliction found grace. This is the LORD'S way with those who call on Him in affliction.*

The spiritually wise inherit Glory ...and the reward of those who fatten themselves is shame.
We are shown the eternal good that comes of spiritual wisdom and the shame that results from living to the flesh or literally "attending to the stomach" Shame is the contumacy of "giants" or "fools" Hebrew lysk Here the end of Goliath may well be in view. The contumacy that despised the LORD ended in shame not only for this giant but for the Nephilim of ancient days.

PROVERBS 4

Discipline & doctrine 1-3

Hear my sons and obey the discipline of your father, and prick up your ears to learn understanding by experience. *Though the stronger use of rSy is in concert with Proverbs 13.24 "He that spares the rod hates his son". Here as used with "hear" and alongside "understanding" it is best understood as verbal rebuke. For I am giving you cheerful -ethical and captivating doctrine; do not forsake my Torah. Here Solomon refers to the bounds of law he has established for his family. For when I was just a son of my Father, small and tender and the only one belonging to the faces of my mother he also taught me (Hebrew hry "laid a foundation") and spoke to me. Solomon is saying that David affirmed Bathsheba's sweet rebuke.*

Solomon quotes David 4B-13

Let my words hold themselves or adhere to your heart. Hear my instructions and live the life of God. Buy wisdom buy understanding, do not forget or turn away from the words of my mouth. *David wanted Solomon to value piety or the skill to interpret prophecy and to value the mediated work of the Lord revealing truth. Do not forsake her and she will watch over you; love her and she will keep you verdant and flourishing. The spiritual life is advised by David as primary. The relationship with God would ensure "shepherd care" and "freshness" or "spring like life" Piety is the principle thing-so buy piety-in the house of all you buy get mediated understanding. Build up wisdom as a mound and she will exalt you, she will honour you because you embrace her. She will give your head ornaments of grace, she will keep delivering diadems of glory The latter rap are also "bridegrooms coronets"-of which Solomon had many. But David was teaching that piety would make Solomon as happy as a bridegroom many times over. Solomon diverted from monogamy to treaties and marriages of convenience-Solomon appears to be stressing that "grace" and "divine honour" are the priorities of David and ones which he believes, despite his practice, are best.*

Hear and receive my words, my Son, and the years of the life you have will be "many" or great". In the path of piety I conceived you; I caused you to walk in the public ways of straightness. When you walk slowly to mount up your steps will not be grievous and when you run you will not totter. Hold on to foundational doctrine or discipline -do not be slack or desert her -she is your life. *Here Solomon shows that from the first he taught his children piety. He continued to teach them the public application of wisdom. He showed wisdom opened the path to mounting higher in life and stressed the basic and fundamental nature of piety.*

Two paths 14-22

Do not go in the public ways of evil men; and do not keep going straight on in the way of the wicked. Reject it, do not pass into it, decline (Hebrew hfc) it and pass on your way. They do not sleep unless they have done evil, and they are robbed of sleep except they cause someone to fall.

For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence. The path of the righteous is as light-shining splendour of the sun-going on and shining until the full noon. The way of the wicked is as darkness; they do not know what made them stumble. *The path leads to the full undecending radiance of the LORD'S eternal presence*

My son prick up your ears at my oracles, incline your ears to my words of promise. Do not let them bend from before your eyes; keep them in the centre of your heart. For they are life to those who find them and healing to all their flesh. *Believe and do not bend scripture promises, many of which hold in time and eternity.*

The prophetic watch-tower of expectation 23-27 (cf2 Timothy 4.8)

Watch over your heart from the watch-tower (Hebrew רזח) for the goings forth of life belong from there. Put away (Hebrew רש) a twisted or perverted mouth and put far away lips that go back. (Hebrew זח) Let your eyes look straight before you and your eyelids straight before you. Weight up and prepare the path of your feet and let all your ways be well founded. Do not turn right or left; withdraw your foot from evil. *The heart is the citadel. The mouth must be true; the way we take is established by truth and constituted by God-prepared (by prayer and the word) and to this path of life the believer must stay loyal.*

In all this advice three things emerges

- 1. Solomon wants his family to be pious and live as God would have them-god-like*
- 2. Doctrine and discipline are of the fabric of living for God*
- 3. The Heart must be observed from the watch-tower of scripture to survey the tendency of desires and the way that is taken.*

PROVERBS 5

Do not commit adultery 1-6

My son, give ear to my comprehensive learning/piety מך ; incline your ear (Hiphil חפ) to my understanding Solomon is asking for attention because he has piety and a range of skills in marital and male-female relationships and also because he has divine prompting and guidance from the LORD. In order that you may guard honour and watch out for plots or evil purposes or a "web of deceit" (Hebrew ממז) and that your lips may guard (Hebrew רח) which means to "keep hidden while observing and being aware" like one watching a vineyard.) What you know intimately. The use of these two verbs is very kindred. The man watching a garden is openly observing day and night as he walks about, the vineyard watcher has a tower and is hidden. So there is "the awareness of what to look for" and the "culture of privacy"-both are vital in this area.

For the lips of the "scattering" or "winnowing" or "pressing" or "woman (Hebrew חרז רחז)" "strange woman" drip or distil spontaneous drops (Hebrew פח more like "myrrh" -honey being מן) so that the danger of death and burial are suggested) and her trained seat of perception (Hebrew חן) is more bland or slippery than oil and afterward she is bitter as wormwood (Hebrew חן meaning both "poisonous" and "noxious") sharpened as a blade with two faces (Hebrew דד intends "sharpened" for use and the idea of "two-faced" is well-suited suggesting a complex character and a double life) Her feet flow down to death The picture is compelling. Solomon uses the word "Jordan" to describe water which in time becomes salt in the dead sea-so the adulteress flows in apparent loveliness inexorably towards death. Her feet take her to dangerous places. Her slow delicate steps will cast her down to Sheol She seems to mount but she will fall to her death as a climber Unless you level out the public path of her lives you will not know her wheels are wandering this way and that Solomon adopts the image of a chariot which is all over the place and he is also urging that only by using the balances of discernment can one know her (Hebrew חד) -other than by involvement with her.

Do not commit adultery 7-11

And now, my sons listen to me and do not remove as a degenerate branch from the words of my mouth, let your way be far from her. Do not go near the open door of her house, lest you give your honour to those who come after you Solomon advises that his sons would not only thus lose their "freshness" but the honour of succeeding Him and walking in the ways of David and give your years to the poisonous or harsh one. Lest strangers are sated by your riches and your labours are in the

house of the "stranger" (Hebrew *rkn* "foreign" in the sense of "one who follows other gods") lest you end up growling like a lion (for such prey) in your last days and your body and the remnant of your life is consumed or pines away.

Last words of regret 12-14

And you say, "**How I hated discipline or correction**" (Hebrew *rsm* "correction by rod") and my heart rejected and my heart rejected with contempt reasoned pleading (Hebrew *hkw*) I have not listened to the voice my trainers nor inclined my ear to those who taught me. I was as but a little (we would say "within an inch") of my life by all the evil in the heart of the congregation and assembly despite having good teachers and a father's discipline you will say "I was living in a way that invited ruin right within the people of God"

Faithful in marriage 15-20

Drink water from your own cistern (Hebrew *mym* of "satisfaction") and flowing water (Hebrew *lzn* of "willing relationship") should your fountains disperse themselves out of doors, dividing waters in the streets? Let them be yours alone and no strangers with you. Let your well be blessed. The sons of Solomon are advised to keep their relationships with women modest and centred in home life. They are advised not to consort with strangers and to seek God's blessing on intimate procreative relationship-that is -to invoke the Creator Himself in respect of looking towards a family. Rejoice with the wife of your youth. As a deer of loves and a doe of grace... let her breasts satisfy you in every fit or opportune or happy time. Always be "intoxicated" with her love (Hebrew *hgv*) for why, my son, should you be intoxicated with a strange woman (Hebrew *hrz* from *rz*) and embrace the bosom of a strange dissembling woman

Before the eyes of the LORD 21-23

For the ways of a man or husband are straight opposite the eyes of the LORD and He is a constant leveller of all his (the man's) public paths (Hebrew *slp* meaning "He prepares a way for His anger" or "He holds the balance level"-the LORD is either preparing judgement or supplicating-what a fine line in here in this word. Both are entailed-let every man who is alive look back on his marital life and be utterly thankful if he is still rejoicing in the wife of his youth and if He is conscious of the blessing of God. Again let every man remember that God's wheels of judgement turn slowly and stand in awe and let every man be conscious of the grace of Christ the intercessor!) **His own gross sins entrap the wicked and by the ropes of his sin he is held fast. He shall die because of absence of discipline** and for the greatness of his folly he shall wander from the way of divine command or become intoxicated The last word on the matter is that failure of discipline leads to death by folly and wandering from the LORD'S path

PROVERBS 6

The trap of surety 1-5 Word analysis

The act of surety (Hebrew *brl*) is such a commitment that the one who undertakes it is like a member of the Lloyds insurance group or of a building society. The capital that person invests is imprisoned by promise. So the lives of the insured and the insurer are interwoven. There is no facility for withdrawal from commitment. The word *απαβων* as used in Aristotle "Politics" 1.4.5 "a pledge or deposit required of those undertaking public works" is almost letter for letter the Hebrew *brl* [A'RABON which means "to engage the heart" or "interchange with someone" as in Jeremiah 30.21 "Who is this who has engaged his heart to approach me as a priest?" From this it is patent how deeply the LORD Jesus Christ is committed to His children. For further study see Genesis 38 17-20 and Ephesians 1.14 where Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as the down payment on our lives-His high commitment. cf Also 2 Corinthians 1.22 & 5.5 "sealed with the ARRABON of the Holy Spirit in our hearts" & "He has given us

the earnest ARRABON of the Spirit so we are always confident" Returning to the Hebrew there is a connotation of "sweetness" in the original word. The sweetness comes from the "mix"-how the LORD THE SPIRIT weaves His will and joy into our lives. It is as if the LORD never wanted to leave us-He is eternally committed to us. He has engaged Himself inextricably with us in love-it is as if he is willingly trapped in this friendship which must often disappoint Him.

Solomon on "security" and the "Eternal Security of the Believer"

My son if you go surety for a friend, if you were or will be striking hands with a stranger as a surety for him you have hooked yourself (Hebrew *vqj* "made yourself a bait") by the words of promise from your mouth. You are a captive of the words of your mouth (Hebrew *dkl*-or in the Hithpael "you hang together")

What now? Pull out my son and save your life(Hebrew *lxn* a self regarding rescue" drawing out" despite " "despoiling [the other]" is advised)For you have come into the hand of your friend, go and when you have prostrated yourself open your heart to your friend (Hebrew *bhr* "open your mouth wide" like our "explain all")Never has the LORD Jesus come over all Christian history and told one of his own He could not keep a promise. Employing the wise directions of Solomon to assess our "security in Christ" we conclude He is well able to shoulder his saints. **Give no dream sleep to your eyes or slumber to your eyelids. Deliver yourself as the (beautiful "swift footed") gazelle from a hand and as a bird (primarily" sparrow") from the hand of the fowler**

Do not be lazy 6-15

Go to the ant (Literally "The one who cuts") you slothful one; look (with future or prophetic interest) at her paths and be practical (even "pious"). Who, having no prince, writer or teacher (of parables) arranges or weighs her food or bread in harvest time and gathers in corn harvest. How long O careless one will you lie down? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep -a little slumber. A little embracing of hands on account of lying with a wife(Hebrew *bkv*) So comes a" cutting back(Hebrew *lhm*) account or bill and your need as a warrior with a shield In the 2008 economic scene many have personal experience of the instant danger of a bill-so like an armed man who threatens very life itself . A man of Belial a husband of gross evil walks (in his life) with a twisted (deceitful) mouth; he winks (behind others backs) with his eyes; he speaks (Hebrew *llm*) taps or stamps with his feet; he points with his fingers (Hebrew *hry*-literally he is a "pointer") **Change overthrowing or turning back (Hebrew *kph* is in his heart)He devises evil every time. He sows strife**

For that reason a heavy burden (Hebrew *dja* -Job 21.30 -et alii-often "God sent") will come suddenly. Unexpectedly or at the opening of the eyes he shall be broken and there will be no healing. This latter is a play on the "winking". He will suffer a heart attack maybe and he will not recover."

If God should choose I could lose all I have in a moment of time

Things the LORD hates 16-19

These six the LORD hates and these seven are horrible to his soul. Eyes of pride; a tongue of lies or colouring; hands that pour out the blood of the innocent; a heart devising an embroidery of evil; feet that hasten to run to do evil; a false witness who speaks lies (Hebrew "drying up" *bzk* in the sense that the witness denies or professes not to remember the truth) and one who sows contention or judgement between brothers.

The LORD hates those who continue in these states (In the original participles are in use to show "consistent states) the proud; the liar; the murderer; the immoral; the violent; the false witness, the rumour monger.

The way back to God 20-23

My son, observe your father's command or commission (Hebrew *hwx*) and do not let go of the law (Hebrew *hrwt* "what she pointed out") of your mother. Bind them upon your heart as an apron continually (the idea of "serving" lies here-serving others and serving God) Tie them as ministers

around your neck. These with "mercy & truth" are regarded in Proverbs 1.9 & 3.3 and in this place as emblems of "loving service" and of "respectful witness & confession". **Wherever you will have gone or to go they will lead you back** (Hebrew *hjn* "to lead back to former places or ways" cf Job 12.23) Parents who are faithful to the LORD are the best help towards recovery that an errant youth can have. **In your sleeping** (the word *bkv* used for sleeping with a wife and/ or with the law and commissions of God in your heart) they will watch over you. When you show signs of waking she (Hebrew is distinctly "she" not they)-as if you will be thrilled first to meet the divine law with its commission for the day and start off spiritually. **For the commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light of day.** A showing by correcting or arguing and maintaining the right of discipline is a way of life. David stressed that the Torah was useful for "conversion"-Psalm 19.8. Solomon stated that this manner of coming to see the "right" is "A way of life" not just a device for getting one out of bother. The thing a father suggests and commissions is like a lamp-it is not as clear as what God's own word says-but it helps in the darkness of doubt.

The voice of God through parents serves to guard the moral life 24-26 These are a hedge or guard against a bad wife; to being taken in by the tongue of a foreign woman (& her gods); do not covet her beauty in your heart; do not be taken by her eyelids (by cosmetic beauty) **for between or with a harlot woman a man (is down to) a crust of bread.** And the wife of a man will "eat his very soul (Hebrew *dlx* "furnish her table with")

The life-long effect of adultery-and its seriousness before God 27-35 Is it possible for a man to take fire into his arms and his clothes not going up in flames? If a man walks on a violently burning fire will his feet not be branded? Solomon is making the point that messing about with other women is no light matter. The adulterer pays a heavy price. He illustrates this by showing that although the "flame eater" and the fire-walker" by technique or attendant spirits may emerge unscathed he who holds fire in his garments and the fakir who walk through raging flames both court disaster. So is he who goes in to his neighbour's wife. He who touches (Hebrew [*gn* "to simply touch" or meddle with"]) her shall not be innocent. People do not despise a thief who keeps stealing because he is hungry-yet, caught, he must restore seven times over. He will give up all the possessions of his home. He who commits adultery with a wife lacks heart. He who so acts destroys his own soul (Adultery is a spiritual thing) He will find plagues or blows and shameful discovery and his naked shame will not be blotted out (Hebrew *hjm* the word we use for "wiped out" in the NT too Acts 3.19 & Isa 44.22- here is the real acid test and continuing gross reality of adultery-it is subject to divine remembrance- cf Hebrews 13.4 & Rev 2.22 & 21.8) For ardent zeal or jealousy is a husband's fury, and he will not have mercy compassion or pity (Hebrew *lmj*) in the day of vengeance. He will not lift up the faces of an offering atonement. He will not be inclined desirous or poor enough for the greatness of the bribe Even a poor husband who is wronged by a rich man will be a robust enemy and there will be no "cover up" no atonement.

PROVERBS 7

"Wisdom", my sister 1-5

My Son watch my commands (Hebrew *npz* "Watch" like your garden" or "your sheepfold") and lay them up as store with you (Hebrew *npX* to use and bring out on a destined day) Watch or keep my commands and live or live the life of God and my law as the "husband" of your eyes Solomon does not use the word "apple" which is "pupil". In Psalm 17.8 David speaks of himself as the "beloved pupil of the daughter of God's eye" and in Deuteronomy 32.10 Moses speaks of Jacob as "the beloved pupil of God's eye". Solomon's variant is "the husband or 'master' of your eyes"-in other words he is emphasising that the eyes are not so much in this case lovely and star pupils but pupils whose attention wanders and whose affection for what is taught and whose commitment to the teacher is indifferent. **Bind them on your fingers.** The law was bound to the arm since ancient time. Here Solomon seriously asks his sons to bind his commands to the "forefingers" as rings to act as ever present teachers and admonishers. **Write them on the table of your heart** Memorise them. **Say to skilful wisdom** (cf 1Kings 4.29-34 & 10.1 & 5.12- the "gift of God" which begins with assuming God given responsibilities with His enabling and acquires a wide spread of skills retaining an expansive heart) **You are my well**

loved sister. And call understanding your intimate acquaintance. *Understanding (Hebrew nyb means "mediator" or "umpire" hence Paul's "umpire of the heart" Col3.15 Bpαβευς) is as Christ within "acquaintance" in the sense of one you love too much to compromise. They will keep you from the immoral woman (Hebrew hrz "dispersing" for she spreads herself around, and "examining" for she wants to know all about you) from the "foreign" one the one you are ignorant of who is smooth and flattering in her words.*

From my window at twilight 6-9 **A CLASSIC PASSAGE**

For at the window of my house I leaned around bending my whole length and I saw among the simple(Hebrew ytp "easily enticed" open-minded")**I well understood among the sons a youth lacking in thought or will or wisdom** (literally "heart")**passing along the Suq or street and he slowly mounted up the way to her house**(Hebrew d[x])**in the cool air**(cf Gen 3.8 "God walking near-conscience speaking clear) **of the day's twilight**(which a poetic Irish professor used to call "day-li-gone"(day-light-gone) **in the beloved little pupil of the darkness of evening; in the obscurity at sunset** Solomon depicts the youth as now a pupil of "darkness" and not "light" or "wisdom". Solomon watched this activity just outside his own palace. He followed it with interest-he is even able to hear the words of the harlot in the stillness of the evening-perhaps the gentle evening breeze is carrying the sound even better

The Harlot's speech 10-17

And behold a "wife" met him with the dress of a harlot and having observed (Hebrew Passive Participle of rxn) **his faults of understanding. She was boisterous or loud** (which explains how Solomon could hear her speech) **and rebellious or stubborn. Her feet will not stay in her own house. At a stroke she was outside the wall of her house; at a stroke she was in the squares so as fast as the blacksmith could strike his anvil a few times she had moved from one to the other. Reserving and standing waiting at every corner. She performed her act of pressing upon him** (Hiphil performative) **and kissed him on the mouth. With a consoling face she spoke to him promisingly. My thank offering of friendship are owed , just today I have fulfilled my promise-for that very reason I came to meet you; to seek your face since morning and now I have found you. I have spread the couches of my curtained bed-variegated colours of Egyptian thread work** the implication is -you would enjoy being there-you should see it. **I have perfumed myself my bed with myrrh aloes and cinnamon** The implication-lets go-for pleasing cocktail of love and ambience are well understood by loose persons

My husband is not at home 18-20

Come let us breathe and enjoy love (Hebrew mydd the "touching" or "caressing") **until morning. Let us get ourselves hidden away in love for my husband is not at home. He has gone on a distant journey. He has taken a purse of silver in his hand and he will come home on the first day of full moon** We note that it was quite dark at twilight in v9 so this was not just a one night stand-it was the beginning of a dangerous adulterous relationship.

He yielded-he did not know it would take his life 21-23

With her flowing talk she inclined or turned him to take her. With her smooth lips she was free with him. He went after her stroke by stroke as an ox to the slaughter, as when fetters correct a fool until an arrow pierced his liver. As a sparrow precipitate to the snare he had no idea he was in danger of his life & soul.

Clearly he was readily seduced. He found her liberal with fondling caresses and walked with her. His end was an arrow in the stomach. The king knew his end. Whether the king was privy to his downfall or did not interfere we must read onto discover.[for those who cannot wait turn to Chapter 22.14) What we do know is that in consorting with this woman the simple youth transgressed the moral law and violated rights of a husband in the affections of his wife.

Prostitution-the way to hell 24-27

Now my sons listen to me, prick up your ears to the words of my mouth. Do not reach for her ways to belong to her heart. Do not wander into her beaten path or way of life. She has been the

fall of great ones pierced through or laid open. And all slain by her were strong men her house the paths to Hell going down to the private rooms of death

PROVERBS 8

This chapter is to be read in the light of the tragic end of the "simple"(Chap.7) and constitutes God's rescue plan After weeping in the streets for the victim of the prostitute the evangelical call goes out calling men to Christ.

"Wisdom's work" 1-11

(1) Has not "wisdom" been crying and will it not weep (or) proclaim (or) call to itself Hebrew *arq* will "prudence" not cause its voice to be received (or) locate its defensive voice (or) make its voice? (Heard)**(2) In the supreme place (or) summit of high places by the side of the trodden path house of beaten paths or busy highways she will station herself** *The effect is that wisdom and prudence will seek and obtain key position in rule and defence and supervision and it has always been so.***(3) Belonging to the hand (Hebrew *dj* meaning "power of government") of the gates belonging to the entrance to the city where (you) come in the doors she will celebrate joyously** *Solomon sees wisdom as attentive to national and city defence and celebrating because of her vigilance. He sees "wisdom" prepared to get involved and as intimately in touch with what is taking place.* **(4) To you O husbands and warriors I am calling and my voice is to the sons of man** *Wisdom is not choosy but cares about everyone.* **(5) Simple ones learn (or better) teach craft or skill of thought, and fools teach affection (or) purposeful thinking (or) wisdom.** *The Hiphil imperatives are more suited to the concept of "teaching" than "learning" although teaching entails learning. It is prudent to teach those who are easily enticed to be wary and wily as it is to teach those who have no faith and low morals to follow the divine purpose and lifestyle of which they become in time exemplars and exponents.* **(6) Listen for I range in order** *Hebrew *rbd* (which Dutch etymologists traced to the root "arrange in order") excellent or noble things literal Hebrew "first things" *dygn** **(7) and the opening of my lips is because of the things of integrity justice (or) valour** *The spiritual wisdom of Solomon was concerned (a) to have priorities of faith in order and (b) to affirm both the basis and applications of justice.* **(8) For my seat of discernment** *Hebrew *Jkj* meditates or murmurs truth and my lips detest wickedness.* **(9) All the illumining words of my mouth are in righteousness, none of them is "spin"** *Hebrew *l tp* or will incriminate me (or) pervert right. They are all "plain in front of him" to the man of understanding and "straight" to the man who searches for knowledge by experience. Receive my instruction and not silver and personal experience (of me) rather than choosing for yourself bright gold dug from the earth (Hebrew *zwrj*)* **(10) for wisdom is better than rubies and all delights will not compare or be on a level with her.**

Wisdom's eternal Son

Wisdom's counsel (is eternal) 12-21

I wisdom dwell with prudence or skill... Hebrew *hmr* [... and I discover (the issues) of experience and counsel. The fear of the LORD is to hate evil, lifting up oneself and glorious pride. I hate the perverse mouth. Planning power *Hebrew *hx* [and the setting up of anything* *Hebrew *hyvwt* belongs to me. I am understanding or mediated explanation and warrior strength belongs to me. By me kings will reign and august princes will have decreed justice. By me princes rule right and nobles -all the judges of righteousness.* *The need for wisdom in ruling peoples goes without saying and the wise Spirit of God speaking in scripture is making bold to say that the One who uniquely impersonates wisdom is Sovereign over kings. My fruit is better than bright solid gold and my income than self selecting silver. I will go in the public path of righteousness* *The Sovereign LORD speaking in scripture is stating His willingness to tread the winepress-to move among men, in the middle of the popular beaten paths of justice to cause those who love me* *Hebrew *bha* meaning "breath after me" or prove a friend as Abraham was called a "friend of God" Isaiah 41.8 to inherit wealth. As the passage moves towards a clearer view of Christ the sovereign LORD is declaring in scripture that He will enable justice and cause men to inherit that which is more precious than earth's greatest riches. I will fill their treasuries* *Hebrew *rxā* meaning "the hidden inside treasuries of the heart and soul of man" In truth the Spirit of God rules in the heart for Christ and "the infilling" of the Holy Spirit is a doctrine clearly taught in the NT. cf Acts 9.17*

Wisdom's covenant (is eternal) (cf the divine and human) 22-26

The LORD possessed me.. Hebrew *hmq* meaning "riches"...**at the first of His ways or "goings" or treadings before his "glorious deeds" from formerly** Hebrew *zam* meaning in NT times that Christ the wisdom of God was present from before the first actions God took to stir the universe into life-before any act God took to create. **My "pouring out in covenant"** or "my inter-twining" was from a "remote" or hidden era" or "eternity". (Daniel has a usage similar "from eternity to eternity" or "hidden to hidden" Dan2.20)**From sovereign leadership before the earth was. In the economy or house when there were no abysses-no "space" no "seas" no "black holes". I was continually waiting "remaining strong"** Hebrew *ytllmj* with the significance of **fitness** for warfare. A fitness of virtue **twisting around** (the Father) The action here is as two people dancing. Thus the Son was the Father's delight or as the theologians say, "**continually generated**" which is I believe the most confusing rendering in view of Christ's co-eternality. So to summarise:

(a) Before deeds registered in the bible or any movements thereto.

(b) As the ultimate sovereign outside time

(c) Fit for the cross even in those pre-creation days.

(d) Delighting the Father and drawing strength and joy from their relationship of perfection.

In the house of no fountains making themselves heavy with water. Earth has not yet come into being. **Before the mountains had been sealed or dipped into the water.** Solomon indicates that just as at the flood so at earth's beginnings the mountains were under the waters which yielded to mighty ancient fountains. It would seem there were massive volumes of water creating weight and overwhelming all land. **Before the elevations of summits I was fit, delighting, living. Before He made earth and lands.** Before the geography of the pre-diluvian world came into shape...**and the first dust of the world** out of which man could be made. Man was made after the waters were divided into seas and hydrosphere.

Wisdom's companionship (is eternal)

The one who co-authored "creation" speaks through Solomon of His experience 27-31

When He performed the preparation of the heavens I was there. The heavens were prepared as a meal. Saturn retains the name *Chiun* or "cake". The heavens were "established" or "constituted" and had been prepared like a meal in a kitchen before arriving on the table. **I was in the house** Hebrew *b* (or "redemption" economy) **of His decree when He drew a circle upon the faces of the deep** The earth with its waters was a "globe" **(I was) in the house when He made firm and nimble the dust cloud (or) firmament from above. (I was) in the house of making mighty the fountains of the deep. I was in the house of His settlement when He gave His ordinance to the sea and its waters will not pass "his lip"** The edge of the sea at any time is actually the edge of the command of God-the two words in Hebrew are identical *ph*. **(I was there) in the house of his engraving of the foundations of the earth.** The statement is unusual -and depicts the LORD engraving the foundations or portraying them when the ordinance Hebrew *qqj* was made and before their existence. **I was there at His side an architect** or trustworthy continuing support-the Hebrew is *mma* from *mma*. **And I was day by day His delight.** Hebrew *[v]* In the "acts of creation" day by day the Son "delighted" the Father in the sense of giving such delight that the Father was "blind to all else" -even the glory of heaven itself did not surpass what was now in train. The succession of days as it culminated in the creation of man gave utmost joy.

Solomon leaves us in no doubt as the Spirit and Wisdom of God inspires him that during these creation days the Father's love and "delight" in the Son involved very especial demonstration of affection (especially in the light of the love that Christ was in time to demonstrate on the cross under the eternal decree to make man (Genesis 1.27) This form of the verb *my[v]* is otherwise used in Jeremiah 31.20. of the "merriment" of rebuilt and reconstituted Israel in Messiah's time. So the merriment of the days of creation and the merriment of the millennium grab the headlines for the most joyous times in all scripture and "under the sun."

(a) Smiling or laughing or exchanging humour for the joy and laughter also "belonged" to the Father's face" Hebrew Piel of *pv* **on every (proper) time** The Son of God speaks of those times as "happy times.

(b)Rejoicing continually (Hebrew Piel) in the fertile inhabitable world of God's earth. *The oikoumene in Greek-the "house that abides long" This idea of "God's world" occurs also in Job 37.12 and Psalm 90.2. In the first instance the weather-with its hurricanes and frost and fertilising rain remain in God's hands to frustrate men and forward His plans; in the second Moses confirms that before "the world of God's earth" from "hidden time to hidden time" the LORD is God(in three persons.)*

(c)Rejoicing intensely with the happy sons of men. *Another Piel, and an "intensive" Pilel to convey the impression of "multiplied joy" as children are born within the human race and as they find genuine joy in the LORD. This joy is proclaimed in the NT in connection with the salvation of souls-in Luke 15.10.*

The ground of human happiness 32-36

Now my sons listen to me, for happy are those who keep my ways *This is not Solomon speaking of himself -this is the LORD speaking to those in whom He rejoices. **Hear instruction** or "teaching by yoke" Hebrew רסמ and be "spiritually and practically wise" or "fit to judge" Hebrew מכj and do not disdain it Hebrew [רפ which means "to let a horse loose -to let go of the bridle-to throw discipline to the wind. The teaching is to "submit to the divine yoke" and live a disciplined life failing which one's conduct becomes loose and even dangerous and may be compared to the state of a runaway horse. **Happy is the man who keeps listening to me watching** Hebrew דqv meaning "fixing attention" **day by day upon my doors** In this instance the word for the "actual door" not so that we might go in or out but so that we might be ready for the Master's new appointments and live in expectation of His company. It probably continues the rural idea where the farmer's presence arouses the farm to activity daily. **..Watching the posts of my doors.** Hebrew j tp "open doors" Here the commandment was traditionally lodged by Jews and here the blood of the atonement was applied every year. So the Mezuzahs would declare the great day of remembrance when all the sons would come in to the feast that reminded them of the LORD'S great salvation. **For the finder of me finds lives** meaning he finds God to be his father, the indwelling Spirit in his soul and the Saviour bringing him peace and new security. **and moves delight to and fro or furnishes** Hebrew קמפ **delight** Hebrew מרר is basically "delight" but also has to do with "the goodwill and benefits" of grace. **..from the LORD. But he who sins violates his soul .All who hate me breathe after death.** The hatred of our creator or putting Him far from the centre of our lives is "friendship" with death -it is licentious intercourse-a vain intimacy and alternative delight bound up with terrible consequences.*

PROVERBS 9

The Seven Pillars of wisdom 1

Having introduced "Wisdom" in such a fashion as to point to the centre of the throne of God and of the lamb Solomon goes on to answer a number of questions littered among the proverbs that follow. He does not give us the original question which can be asked in any number of ways but, quite wonderfully, the answer he gives meets a whole spectrum of concerns under the given topics.

The first question is the most fundamental of all, though one should observe that it is not about "How to get wisdom." Solomon gained wisdom by asking the LORD for it. James in the NT concurs, "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God". This is about "What life is about?"-not just character but the "hewing" and honing of the Spirit of God working in us and our working out of these same basics day on day in our lives.

1. The question of the chief purpose and tasks of man?

cf Shorter catechism Q.1 which mirrors this answer!

Q. What is the work of wisdom in day to day life? Or more simply, "What is life's purpose or chief end?"

A. Wisdom's work is begins and continues by prayer and is sevenfold! Producing salvation; sound judgement; open to advice; firmness in the right; courage against the adversary; a learner and teacher; meek and God-fearing! *The crux is that Solomon has a profound grasp of eternal life (Greek ζωνη) which he takes as the ground of this life (Greek Βιος)*

Wisdoms "has" built her house. *The grammar is strange-the facts are right. The word "wisdoms" is in the plural. It is colloquial-as we would say, "The Browns have built a house". It is essentially Mr. Brown who sees to it but it is a family home. Here "wisdoms" are led by the Spirit -hence the feminine tense is used. In 1 Kings 6.1 the term "build" is used of "laying the foundation" but generally it is used of a permanent base for life. **She has hewn as a stone cutter her seven pillars.** The Holy Spirit is associated with perfection. If we compare the "pillars" with the properties of the LORD'S Spirit in Isaiah 11 we find*

1. To God given eternal life or "The Life of God in the soul of man - Pillar No.1 hyl
 2. Wisdom or "fitness to judge and decide aright"-Pillar No.2mkj
 3. Understanding or "receiving advice" or "Mediator led appreciation"="Christ led living"-Pillar No.3nyb
 4. Courage or backbone-"firmness in the cause of right-Pillar No.4 hz[
 5. The desire to strive for (spiritual) victory or the will to win with God-Pillar No.5 hrmbg
 6. A bank of experience (or) Personal experience of God and the ability to teach -Pillar No.6 t[d
 7. The submissiveness and meekness that "honours" and reverences the LORD -Pillar No.7 ymda ary
- I am convinced that Isaiah did not pull these mighty principles out of the air. Both he and Solomon before him knew them and lived by them. They are vital to every age of the LORD'S people. There is labour behind all of these. No.1 The labour of conscience as one is moved by the Spirit and called to receive Life by faith. No.2 The labour of putting all the evidence together to make wise decisions-assimilates to the long training of a lawyer. No.3 The labour of insisting that this poor self grow less and less and Christ become all in all; No.4 The courage to lie for months and years in prison if need be for the cause of right or of taking up the cross; No.5-the striving against sin clad with all God's armour is as daunting a task as any soldier is given among the wild tribesmen of Helmand province Afghanistan. No.6-Becoming familiar with scripture and receiving training so as to teach others. Finally, No.7-the discipleship that starts on the long journey of faith and the discipline of walking with God and teaching His truth; above all the wisdom to watch with eternal vigilance against the subtle enemy of pride. Of the seven pillars unless they stand in a row as mere ornamentation "one" must stand on its own. That one is, I believe, the seventh **"the fear of the LORD"** which is featured at v.10.*

2. The question of a (social & spiritual) rescue plan? 2-6

Q. How do you rescue those deluded by sin?

A. You spend and send and persist! After the example of Christ Luke 4 18-19

Wisdom has slaughtered her meat to cook; she has mixed or spiced her wine. *"Wine is the best of medicines; where wine is wanting doctors thrive." is a more recent Jewish proverb. The habit predominant among the ancients was to mix sometimes 3 and other times 5 parts of water with 1 of wine so it would be refreshing but slightly exciting. To drink "unmixed" wine was regarded as "barbarian". Wisdom secures against drunkenness. **She has also "stretched out" her table-"extended it" (or) "estimated her table".** Hebrew Jr[Wisdom has related the table both to utmost generosity and utmost expense. How fine a parable of our Saviour's gospel provision! **She has sent out her maidens** John Kitto in loci has an example of 10 maidens calling out in the sharp traditional recurrent "Lille' Lille' Lille' call. This general call by as many attendants as can be mustered is enhanced by her own call **She was calling (or) will call from at the back part** Hebrew ypg **of the high places of the city.** Wisdom sends them on their way to the thoroughfares while she combs the slums and ghettos. Hear her **Whoever is open to persuasion move or come over here.** This invitation is one of some significance. It does not just mean come to a feast-it means "change your ways" Hebrew rsy-as Elijah turned into the widow's house in 2 Kings 4.8 for permanent benefit, your poor life style-everything about you. **And the failing of heart or one lacking compassion or destitute she says to him, "Come eat in the house of my bread."** This is a Mephibosheth-like invite to those despairing in the land where no good word cheers. **And drink in the house of wine of my mixing.** She is providing the best for the poor. **Forsake the open enticements and (youthful) delusions and really live and go straight or live happily in the way or Road of understanding** This invitation is to change address and with it change to upright living and a happy lifestyle and leave the back streets of sin. cf Amy Carmichael Dohnuvar; Dave Wilkerson New York; The Lighthouse, Chicago-all of which gave 24/7 support to people in need.*

3. The question of rebuke 7-9

Q. I got into trouble for rebuking a colleague. Where did I go wrong?

A. Be careful whom you rebuke, expect come-back. Reproof works to advantage with the just Rebuking or reproof(as a continuous task) *Hebrew rsy* the mocking or impudent one(who imitates another derisively) means taking the contempt or "making light" or "roasting" *Hebrew hlq* that belongs to him In other words you receive the same treatment as the person you defend was handed out. **He who in one (performative) act argues and proves his point with the wicked receives the blot that belongs to him.** In other words to "have it out" with a seriously violent person leaves a mark on one's life. The Hebrew word *šam* is used in Job 31.7 in the sense of "blot". It can mean "stain" and connects with the verb *šmm* meaning "to be rejected of men". Solomon, for example, must have got a bad press when he had Joab slain by Benaiah. Solomon is saying "there is a price to pay" but the wise must pay the price. After all Jesus was "despised and rejected of men" largely because he withstood and rejected the temple money laundering and scheming of the priests. **Do not in one act perform the reproof of the impudent by argument or in a face-up lest he hate you in future. Having made your point in a session with the wise man -he will love you in future.** We need to take stock of the character with whom we deal. The wise will not lose a friendship over being put straight. He will still be amiable.

Give corrective instruction to the wise and he will be wise more frequently *Hebrew dwl* or "over and over again" as a result. Make a just or righteous man aware (of his words deeds acts or attitudes) and he will increase (his) learning or persuasive instruction

4 The question of long life.10-12

Q. Does living God's way make a difference?

A. Other things being equal it goes for a longer life!

Reverence for the LORD is the serious beginning or "opening up" of wisdom *The Hebrew word "beginning" used here is llj* which in Genesis describes the time when Noah "began to plant a vineyard" and when "men began to call on the LORD." These were serious changes in conduct and were both early beginnings of a pattern of life soon to emerge. **And the knowledge of the Holy (Ones) is understanding or "the ability to umpire between"** *Hebrew hmyb* **For by me your days will be many or "great" or "enough" and years of life will be added to you** *Wisdom makes the difference between choices which have significantly different longevity outcomes.* **If you are wise you are wise for your (own good) If you act impudent or scoff you alone bear (the consequences.) or offer your life up.** *Hebrew hv* There is no doubt for Solomon that upright living is attended by beneficial life expectancy. The longest lived members of the human race anciently were God fearers.

5. The question of prostitution 13-18

Q. How can sinful gratification of sex be avoided?

A. Avoid the location, don't be duped by sweet talk; be aware of eternal consequences

The NT teaches that "no (practicing) fornicator" shall be found in heaven. 1 Cor 6.9, Rev.21.8

A woman (or) wife of follies (or giants) is humming like a harp *Hebrew hmh* (She is) "open wide" signifying her revealing appearance and seductive heart or easily enticed and she does not why. *The tune of her heart is mournful but she has no depth of spirituality to grasp how near to tragedy she walks.* **And she performs her session at the door of her house upon a common seat** *Hebrew ask*

In the vicinity of *Hebrew l* [the important places of the city. **To call those who pass by on the way-those who go straight on their public paths of life. "Whoever is open (or) persuaded let him turn about here. And he who needs affection or wants love** *Hebrew bl rsj* -to him she says, "The secret seminal waters are sweet or pleasant and the flesh (bread) of hiddenness is beautiful" **She does not know that the giants** *Hebrew myapr* are there. **Those who have been meeting or having intercourse with her are in the unsearchable depths of Sheol.** *Solomon is making us aware that fornication is a matter in which hell has an interest. The devil and demons are involved at the centre of this vile conduct which is the reason why it stands alongside the sin of the ancient Nephilim who produced Rephaim or giants. But the prostitute is blissfully unaware that those anciently engaged as she is are now in hell.*

PROVERBS 10

SECTION 2. 10.1-22.16

*PREBENDARY W O E OESTERLEY ARGUED PLAUSIBLY THAT FROM AN ORIGINAL BANK OF PROVERBS APPARENTLY COUNTED BY A SCRIBE AND FOUND TO BE 375 WE HAVE THIS RUMP. CERTAINLY WE CAN SAY THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD HAS CHOSEN TO USE THE SAYINGS SET DOWN IN PROVERBS BOTH IN ISRAEL FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS AND LONG AND WIDELY IN THE CHURCH. THE NAME "HEZEKIAH" (HEBREW *hyqzhy*) READS NUMERICALLY (V=10 + H=5 + Z=7 + Q=100 + V=10 + H=5 GIVING 375)*

The similitudes or comparisons of Solomon *hml v ylv*

This section of the book includes chapters 10-15 and features comparisons of the life of the wise with that of the fool-which class includes the imprudent, the impious, the gossip, the "big fellow" or boastful and the sluggard among others.

*This chapter takes the form of a series of 25 contrasts between the "righteous" and "agitators" or "terrorists" in their extreme form-certainly the "noisy" or "perturbing" sort of people. **Seventeen** of these contrasts are based on a right and affectionate way of life against which the stark contrasting heart and acts of the wicked are set out. There are then **Three** further contrasts which feature the decline of the fortunes of the wicked from enjoying a fun attitude to wrong downgrading through fear to terrible calamity. The final **Six** contrast the bright future of the righteous with the ruin of the wicked. These proverbs are part of a larger traunche of 129 proverbs which are mingled with 22 wise declarations through chapters 10-15*

Wisdom is active & assiduous 1-7

A son of wise decision is joy of father and a son of folly is pain (of mind) of his mother.

The hoarded treasures of a wicked man do not once perform (Hebrew *Hihpil* of "to profit" *Wly[wy]*) but righteousness (of the righteous) snatches from death in one act.

The LORD will not perform the famishing of the life of the righteous but He will push away or repel the desire of the wicked or thrust his life into darkness Hebrew *pdh*

He who does business with a fraudulent hand will be poor but the hand of the man who is assiduous or hastens Hebrew *XWR* to his task will make rich.

He who gathers in summer is son of "prudence" or "the man who crossed his hands" Hebrew *lykv* (i.e.) Isaac but he who lies senseless or stupefied in harvest is a son of shame.

Blessing belongs to the head of the righteous but violence covers the mouth of the wicked

The memory of the righteous is for blessing but the name of the wicked ones will begin to rot in life. (Hebrew *bqr*)

The imprudent in speech 8-17

The wise of heart will take commands but the imprudent of opening or restraining lips (Hebrew *mytpv*) will be thrust to the ground

He who walks in uprightness walks in faith confidence or security (Hebrew *hfb*) but he who twists or perverts his ways (Hebrew *vq[]*) will be known (by peoples') experience (of him)

He who winks behind another's back (Hebrew *xrq*) will give trouble or pain, but a man imprudent of lips will be thrust down.

The mouth of the righteous is a well of lives, but the mouth of the wicked covers or hides violence.

Hatred continually awakens (Hebrew *rW[]*) strife or disputes and love covers over all faults or defections (Hebrew *[vp]*)

Wisdom will find itself on the lips of him who causes himself to be guided in understanding (Hebrew *mbn*) but a rod for the back of him who is devoid (Hebrew *rsj*) of heart or conscience.

(Hebrew *bl* This is a word with implications for lack of reasoning, courage, affection, understanding and even conscience.)

Wise people will store up experience-based know how but the mouth of the imprudent is near to brokenness terror or ruin (Hebrew *ttj*)

The wealth of the rich is his strong city; the destruction of the poor is their suffering poverty
(Hebrew *vwr*)

The hard work of the righteous is for lives; the incomings of wickedness belong to sin.
Keeping instruction is the public path to lives but forsaking rebuke is apostasy or wandering.
(Hebrew *h[t]*)

Contrasting speech 18-21

He who hides hatred has lying lips and he who thinks out rumour or slander is a confident fat or "big" fool Hebrew *ljsk*

In a multitude of words of action there is no want of fault or sin but he who restrains or makes obscure Hebrew *Jvj* his lips is cunning or successful. (The Jacob word *lykc* "skill" in Hebrew)

The tongue of the righteous is as silver of natural choice Hebrew *rjbn*, the heart or conscience of the wicked is as little

The lips of the righteous pasture great numbers, but the imprudent die for want of thought reason
LOVE judgement courage Hebrew *bl* "Leb" covers a number of reasons for death-at the centre of which is lack of that warm affection that makes for a good life.

The blessing of the righteous brings joy that lasts evermore 22-26

The blessing of the LORD she makes rich and does not add sorrow with her. In Isaiah 38.5 God added 15 years to Hezekiah's life. No doubt some sorrow came with it. In Isaiah 29.13 God promises a "work and wonder" to be added to Israel's story-fulfilled at the cross and resurrection. This work of the cross brought blessing to man and peace with God. We do not need to "toil" for our salvation-it is the gift of God. We do not need to fashion graven images and please them-ours is a relationship of humble affection for the One who first loved us.

The blessing of the LORD actively makes rich (Hiphil performative of the Hebrew *rv[]*) **and does not add labour (or) pain (or) grief** (Hebrew *bx[]*) **with it. To do a wicked deed** (as fornication, rape, and incest) **is like a jest (or) fun** (Hebrew *hmz*) **to a fool, but intelligent insight** (Hebrew *hmb*) **is possessed by the spiritual man. The fear** (Hebrew *hrwg* meaning "that from which he turns out of the way *rwg* in timidity) **of the wicked comes upon him; and the longing** (Hebrew *hwa* ""turning aside to lodge-as if the righteous would forsake life's traffic to breath a longing to God) **of the righteous will be answered.**

As the whirlwind passes there are none of the wicked (left) And the righteous will be established for perpetuity(or) have a basis of "eternity" (Hebrew *mlw[]* signifies "hidden" or unknown or unknowable extension) **As sour vinegar to the teeth and as smoke to the eyes so ii the slothful to the one who sends him** (The word "send" can mean "send a plague" and it is in this sense that the slothful is like a plague of smoke and the message he carried like aged wine vinegar is sour by the time it arrives)

Righteousness has staying power 27-32

The fear of the LORD will act to add to (your) days; but the years of the wicked will be harvested short. (Hebrew *rxp*) **The wait, expectation (or) hope** (Hebrew *ljj*) **of the righteous will be joy but the confidence or expectation of the wicked will be destruction** (The base Hebrew is *Abaddon* which ultimately is the "Abyss") **The way of the LORD is strength for the upright or people of integrity** (Hebrew *mt*); **brokenness terror (or) ruin to those who prepare iniquity.**

The righteous will not come down through endless time or eternity; and the wicked will not inhabit the earth. This will be true of the wicked in the era of Messiah but it appertains to land and fields as well. The case of Nabal tends to support this saying. **The mouth of the righteous produces or germinates** (Hebrew *bmm*) **wisdom but the tongue of "change"** The tongue that varies facts to suit itself **will be cut off. The lip of the righteous knows what is accepted or delightful and the mouth of the wicked changing things (or) what can be changed**

"Consequence" is a major sub theme in Proverbs. The righteous & wicked, wise & foolish, industrious & lazy alike live with demonstrable consequences which are emphasised in the next three chapters.

Cloak and dagger (deceptive) living is self-destructive. 1-6

A weight that is fraudulent is an abomination to the LORD but a whole weight is His delight. *The notion of "wholeness" entails "repayment" or "performing a vow". Jewish business was based on "friendship" and "recompense"* **When insolence or haughtiness comes shame will come as well, but with the modest or those who submit to God Hebrew [n]x cognate of [nk meaning "conquered (By God) is wisdom. The uprightness of the just will lead them back or lead them as a commander of troops (Hebrew hjn) but the slipperiness (Hebrew pl/s) of the "cloak and dagger" type will destroy them. Riches do not profit in the day of "flood" or "Passover" (the idea is that when the LORD is angry or when natural disaster comes the rich cannot escape) but righteousness delivers from death. The righteousness of the just will direct his way straight but the wicked will fall by his wickedness. The righteousness of just people will deliver them but the cloak and dagger type will be trapped by his own desire. (This word hwh is at the root of the term for "the LORD" and expresses "self-existence" or "establishment" which of course is not a characteristic of subtle hidden persons who contemplate only their continuance)**

How we live -consequences for cities. Knowing of God gives hope joy righteousness 7-11

With the death of a rebellious (Hebrew [vr) man (Adam) the cord or line of hope will perish (future) and the expectation of the iniquitous Hebrew mwa) has already perished (past tense) The righteous disengages himself from (Hebrew xlj) trouble and the wicked will go down under it. The hypocrite "profane" or even apostate (Hebrew pnj) morally corrupts his neighbour. But by personal knowledge (of God) the righteous will deliver themselves. In the welfare or happiness of the righteous the city will exult and in the perishing of the rebellious there is singing. By the blessing of straight men the city is lifted up but by the mouth of rebels it tears itself down.

Consequences of contempt, slander, lack of guidance, debt 12-15

He who is wanting in compassion understanding or conscience (Hebrew bl) treats his neighbour with contempt but the man of prudence will keep absolutely silent. A slanderer travels around continually revealing intimate discourse but he who keeps faithful conceals act and word (Hebrew rbd) Where there is no "Shepherd's staff" (Hebrew lbj) or "measuring line" or "covenant pledge" (on debt) the people will fall but in the "great counsellor there is Salvation This proverb has for long ages been erroneously translated. The word "multitude" (Hebrew br) is a singular to match the word counsellor (Hebrew x[m]) which is also a singular. In the case of Daniel and the advisors of Babylon it was not numbers but capability that counted. Pharaoh had many advisers but Joseph by virtue of wisdom alone excelled them all. In the time of Micaiah there were many prophets but he alone was reliable. He who goes surety for a stranger will do himself sad injury but he who hates "clapping hands" will be confident or tranquil

The heart that devises or prepares evil invites serious consequences 16-22

A woman or wife of grace hold up or retains honour and fierce men retain riches. The man of covenant mercy does well (Hebrew lmg) by his own life or soul but the fierce poisonous man (Hebrew rzka) brings sorrow or trouble to his own marriage or relatives. The noisy violent man carries out prepared (Hebrew l[p) deeds of deception but to him who sows righteousness the wages are truth or perpetuity or fidelity. As righteousness leads to lives so the pursuer of evil belongs to death. The perverse or crooked of heart are an abomination to the LORD but those perfect in their way are His delight. Though they link hand to hand the evil will not escape punishment. The seed of the righteous will deliver himself. As a ring of gold in a swine's snout so is a beautiful woman who departs from or degenerates from the woman of discretion or taste she was. We look beyond the trees in the section and see "short term-ism" does not pay whereas people of the covenant - righteous ones escape the death that befalls the fierce perverse poisonous noisy and violent. Again the lesson is "consequences" are plain to see and peace comes by steadfastness.

Consequences of giving and with-holding 23-29

The object of desire of the righteous is certainly or exclusively a good one but the expectation of the violent is outpoured wrath. (Hebrew *trb*[]) There is the type of person who bestows largely (Hebrew *rzp*) and still adds to what he has and there is the type who retains more than is right and certainly diminishes. **The soul that blesses will continually be wealthy or have abundance** (Hebrew *Pual of ivd*) and **he who causes (others) to drink will also be sprinkled with rain.** The people will curse (Hebrew *bqn*) him who holds back the fields of growing corn but blessing will be on the head of the "miller" (Hebrew *rbc*) (who prepares it for sale and eating) He who early seeks (Hebrew *rj v* meaning "while it is still dark" or "early in the morning") good will find favour and he who pursues evil (will find) it comes to him. He who trusts in his riches will fall but the righteous will flourish and bud as foliage. He who troubles his house will inherit the wind and the fool will serve the wise of heart.

Eternal consequences of righteousness & evangelism 30-31

The "fruit" of "the righteous" is the tree of life. (Hebrew *myj x*[]) This is exactly the expression in Genesis 3.22. The "offspring" of "the righteous" (the Hebrew is "singular" *qydx*) may be considered spiritual sons of our LORD Jesus and in that connection they are granted "eternal life." **And he who takes souls is wise** (i.e. a "soul-winner" who brings men to God as a husband takes wives-The personal harem of Solomon lent gravity and some ruefulness together with considerable learned wisdom to the writer. The expression commends an interest in the well-being of men spiritually to the reader.)

Behold the righteous one will be recompensed on the earth yet more so at that time or on that account the guilty and the sinner

We will all find earth has rewards to offer but the expression here is I believe **prophetic of the "kingdom of our LORD Jesus"** as a reward for the labour of our Saviour's soul. This is the most splendid consequence of all and as Solomon has drawn attention to the crushing of grain for the nourishment of the people we may well see here the broken body of our LORD as the redemptive offering to give us LIFE. At this point the book of Proverbs brings us to a spiritual "trigonometrical point"

PROVERBS 12

The chief end of man 1-3 Favour and its root (Hebrew *vrvw*)

The one who loves (Hebrew *bha*-like *αβ* of *αγαπη* hence to "be intimate with" or inclined to) **discipline** (Hebrew *rsn* from *rsy* through the Ethiopic-a language so readable to a Hebraist that like many others it promotes the thesis that Hebrew is the world's base or original language. Ethiopic changes the palatal *y* to the semi guttural *ḥ*) The word is used of 'tougher' discipline such as the Greeks applied at school through the monitor who possessed a rod which kept the student focussed) **loves personal relationship** (Hebrew *t[d* corresponds to the Greek *οιδα* [having two letters with exactly the same sound as the Hebrew-enforcing the idea of Hebrew as the base language] of "seeing" or "experiencing for oneself" or "becoming acquainted with any one") To summarise this expression which is so foreign to a politically correct society that has disallowed such early discipline "One invites steady discipline even of a tough type to gain insight experience or better still a "knowledge of (God)" **But he who hates mild reproof** (Hebrew *hykwh* meaning "verbal admonition") **is as a brute** The animal comparison is to beasts which take their own way and have no great interest in relationship with their driver or awareness of what exactly he is trying to do with them. Clearly this proverb is speaking of a culturing of our walk with God. **The good beautiful or cheery -but always "adorning" (to God) person will furnish favour or acceptance from the LORD** This does not mean "cause favour to come" only but in the Hiphil it means "to furnish" favour in the sense of being an enabler who as he or she goes to and fro (Hebrew *qpp*) touches other lives by the influence of a disciplined life through prayer and the Spirit of God. **A man of plotting or "cord tier"** (as in "binding victims") **will be shown to be wicked or judged.** **Adam or mankind is not established or constituted or made by or for violence and the root** (Hebrew *vrv* -a metaphor of "a people" or the central family among a people-in this case the house of David and the Christ who is the ultimate

SHORESH Isaiah 11.10 and Revelation 5.5) of the righteous ones will not totter This then is ultimately a Christological statement!

Consequences of Virtue (cf a wife's character) 4

A wife of "valour" or "strength" or "virtue" these can go hand in hand but each will serve to the same end is a coronet for her husband but she who causes shame is like decay in his bones. The strength of a wife is vital to the strength of the husband. He will weaken if she is weak. His physical strength will lessen if her spiritual and moral fibre is not strong

Consequences of thoughts .5-8

The damasked thoughts of the righteous ones come out of equity or justice but the corrupt "twisted" covenants of the noisy terrorists (Hebrew [vr wicked) are to "trip you up" or "shoot you" (Hebrew hmr) The words of the terrorist are " a network" (The Hebrew bra is "ambush")for blood but the mouth of the upright ones will deliver them (the innocent are released by diplomacy or saved by warning) Terrorists are for overthrowing or "to be overthrown" (Hebrew Jppj Kal infinitive) and to be no more but the house of the righteous ones will stand or abide. According to the mouth of his comprehension a man will have been constantly praised but he who is of "writhing" heart or conscience or "depressed-cum-perverse" mind will be despised. This expression would apply to Saul

Consequences of thoughts are in our actions (Self-awareness) 9-12

Better is the one who counts himself despicable but who has a (faithful) servant than he who counts himself honourable and lacks bread. A righteous man understands and has experience of the life of his beast of burden but the mercies of the terrorists (for the life of men) are virulent or fierce. He who passes over his land (as a ploughman) will be satisfied with bread but he who pursues fruitless objectives is devoid of heart (reason joy love courage understanding) The terrorist desires and binds in a bundle the evil ones and the "root of the righteous ones" will give The contrast is between taking by force and giving voluntarily. The righteousness of God is seen in the giving of his "well-beloved" Son.

Consequences of speech for friendships 13-28

The evil man is trapped by the "broken covenant" or defection or transgression (Hebrew [vp) of his own lips but the righteous will "rise" or "run through" (Hebrew axy) "distress" or "wounds" (Hebrew hrX) This is a glorious promise for those in distress. From the produce or fruit or reward of the mouth of a man he will be well satisfied or satisfied with the best/happiness and the recompense of a man's hands will return to him. The way of a fool is straight in his own eyes but he who listens to counsel or "what impresses" (Hebrew hx[from the root xll "to leave a foot impress in sand") is wise. A fool will gain experience of himself in the day of his anger and a cunning man covers shame. He who acts to kindle (Hebrew Hiphil of hnp) truth brings righteousness to light (Hebrew dqn) but the witness of the fraudulent or the liar is deceitful or beguiling. There are those present who babble as a piercing sword Solomon knows people whose words hurt deeply and yet they go on and on. But the tongue of the wise is a healing agent. The lip of truth and faithfulness shall be established to perpetuity and the tongue of the liar is in action for a moment or suddenly. Deceit is in the heart of those who think up patterns of evil but joy belongs to those who counsel peace. No total calamity will have constantly met or approached the righteous but the wicked or guilty will be full of trouble. Lips of deceit are an abomination to the LORD but the testimony of truth pleases Him. A prudent man conceals personal awareness or knowledge and the heart of a fool will preach (Hebrew arq) folly. The hand of the swift will rule and the indolent (Hebrew hmr) will have his head shaved (as a slave labourer) Anxious care (Hebrew hgad) in the heart of a man acts as the complete cause of depression (Hebrew Hiphil of hjv meaning "bowing down"-which word can mean "worship" but the Spirit that can reach to God here stoops to the earth.) And a good word continually causes joy. The righteous should act to choose (Hebrew rwt "spy out") his friends by going around as against the way of the fraudulent which is to go or lead astray. Diligence is the precious wealth of a man. In the public way of righteousness is LIFE and the footpath (to His house) is not death. The Hebrew bytn is often used of "trodden pathways" but as in Job 38.20 I believe this reference is to a footpath to the house of trusty friends or the LORD Himself. This is not the broad way but exactly the opposite-it is where the path to the house of a special friend leaves the public way.

PROVERBS 13

Words carry consequences 1-3

A son of wisdom (One who has both spiritual and practical discernment) listens to the rebuke or "strong admonition" (Hebrew rsm from rsy Professor Lee thought this word meant "to stir up" hence

the "stirring up" -the exact encouragement Paul wished to give Timothy. Gesenius gives his opinion that it is a "firm admonition" or disciplinary corrective) **of a father but "one who speaks another language" or who mocks does not listen to rebuke.** (Hebrew ר[ג] which means strong rebuke of the haughty or proud and insolent. It was used wrongly by Jacob re Joseph and Boaz deterred his young men from using this form of rebuke and Shemaniah would have used it to condemn Jeremiah. It is appropriate also for the scurrilous or course. In Isaiah 54.9-10 it is used of God's chastisement of the world of Noah's day. The Lord could do no other. But when the LORD speaks solemnly in Isaiah He speaks "softly") **From the fruit of his mouth a man or husband will eat well but the soul of the hidden or perfidious will feed on violence. The one who watches his mouth keeps his soul (safe). He who keeps opening his lips wide-ruin or alarm (Hebrew htjm) is his lot**

Riches all-sorts 4-11

The soul of the slothful has been constantly longing (Hebrew Hithpael of hna) and there is nothing. But the soul of the decisive or diligent will be continually opulent or abundantly satisfied. (Hebrew nvd) A righteous man will hate a word of falsehood or false witness and the guilty will be ashamed and made to blush or cause to be dishonoured. Righteousness will guard the one perfect in his path but wickedness, falsehood or fraud sends the sinner headlong (Hebrew pl s) There stands out (Hebrew vy) the man who has continued to make himself rich and has nothing at all or has not the totality or whole and there stands out also the man who has continually impoverished himself and is very comfortable or has more than enough. The constant piling up of wealth is no guarantee of security in the light of the next proverb which shows that a man's whole fortune may be forfeit as a ransom for his life. The ransom of a man's soul is (all) his riches but he who is in want does not listen to stern rebuke Usually there is a reason for poverty-but more often than not the poor heeds no advice to set his way of life in better order. The light of the righteous will shine joyfully but the lamp of the guilty wicked will dry up. The difference is "oil" and this oil represents the Holy Spirit of God Who lives in the heart of the righteous. Certainly (Hebrew qr) seething or overflowing insolence gives or creates a quarrel and those who consult one another for advice have wisdom. Wealth from corruption will diminish but the man who gathers (working) with his hand will increase in wealth.

Life and Healing 12-14

Expectation deferred or protracted by delay is sickness or grief of heart (Hebrew hlj) when desire (Hebrew hna meaning "turning aside to a lodging or desire for intimacy with a wife or "crying out" as in prayer or need or desire for God) comes it is a tree of life. He who despises or neglects what belongs to the word will cause himself to perish or overturn himself (Hebrew Niphal of lbj) He who fears the commandment will be recompensed. The word (of God) is a means of grace and to neglect scripture is to ruin one's life here and prejudice one's eternal welfare. The LORD on the other hand will reward those who reverence his word and obey it. The Law or doctrine (Hebrew hrwt) of the wise man is a well-spring of life to turn one from the snares of death. Good prudent action (like that of Isaac who crossed his hands in blessing Jacob & Esau) gives grace but the way of the perfidious is terrible or pernicious. (The Hebrew word is ntya which means "constant", firm strong, hard terrible, stony or rock. Jerome renders," The way of the perfidious is a chasm" Thesaurus: "The way of the wicked or unfaithful is a perennial stream"-from the root nty "Perennial". This advice urges that "fraud" "hiddenness" "spoiling" and "rapine" will go on strongly like a great river-like the Euphrates, for example, through history) **Every prudent man will do things with a set purpose (Hebrew t[d])but a fool (Hebrew lysk meaning "fool". Also the name of the "Samson-like" constellation "Orion" which is the fettered or bound giant of the sky) spreads or manifests his folly. A messenger of falsehood or terror falls into evil or disaster but the faithful ambassador "of pain" or "on the rounds" furnished with provisions for the journey (Hebrew rjx) brings health or healing There seems to be a contrast between a messenger heralding trouble and what is an ancient type of doctor. The first carries his own message-the second acts for faithful ones or those who nurse society's woes (Hebrew mymma)**

The value of correction 18-25

Want and ignominy (Hebrew מלq) **come to him who unbridles** (Hebrew [rp) **from correction** *This man is described as a horse which gets rid of its rider who urges it with the stick* **He who watches with regard for his mild correction will continually be honoured** (Hebrew Piel dbk) **Desire** (Hebrew חמא meaning "lodging found, longing realised, heart-cry answered, hunger satisfied, passion consummated, the LORD'S grace experienced) **that comes to realise itself will be sweet** (Hebrew בר[meaning "well-mixed" like beautiful colours woven into a garment) **to the soul but it is abomination for fools "to become an exile" from evil or "cut off evil like a rotten branch"** (Hebrew רוס) **The one who walks with wise men will also be wise and the companion of "Big" "Bound" fools**(Hebrew לysk) **will make himself worse** (Hebrew Niphal of [ר) **Evil persecutes the sinner, the "Good(One)" will reward the righteous** *The ultimate of this truth is that sinners are in the grip of Satan and that the LORD is set to reward His saints.* **The good man leaves an inheritance to his sons' sons; the wealth of the sinner is destined and treasured up for the righteous. Much food is in the ground the poor break up with the plough or spade and without justice there is a scraping together or destruction (of food) *In countries where famine prevails this is the reality-justice brings a land to its knees and people go hungry.* **He who continues to withhold his staff or shepherd's crook hates his son** (i.e. " is his enemy" Hebrew אנו) **He who loves him** (Hebrew בחא like the Greek agapao) **breaks forth as the dawn upon him with sturdy** (cf rsy and hkwt) **discipline** (i.e. begins early) **The righteous eats for the satisfying of his soul but the empty stomach of the terrorist will continue to lack** (food)**

PROVERBS 14

"Wisdoms" of women 1

Spiritual Wisdoms of wives: she builds her house. *It may be the husband that plans or builds the structure in our times though in many countries women labour to build Kraal type homes. Home building is about family development -both growth in numbers and in godliness. Vocational wives do this with some difficulty since the fortunes of their children are often thrust into the hands of others. Where family support exists such building may be in safe hands. The principle is that "the home" and the future of the family in the spiritual realm is largely in the hands of god-fearing women (Hebrew מכj)* **But foolish** (women-the Hebrew is feminine) **devote it to destruction** (Hebrew סרj-the word has the connotation of "allurement" suggestive of libidinous living)

Walking with God, living contrite contrasted with hiding guilt 2-11
(1)He who walks in his uprightness ("of heart"- as opposed to perversity) **fears the LORD but he who bends** (Hebrew זיל which means "to {gradually} incline"[Like a tree towards the sun]) **his ways despises Him.** **(2)The "waving" or "brandishing branch" of 'making himself glorious' or of arrogance** (Hebrew רfj) **is in the mouth of a fool.** *The notion is complex. It is as if his tongue is at once a majestic branch (Hebrew מג) and one that threatens to fall upon you. So he exalts himself and threatens others.* **(3)But the lips of the spiritual** (Hebrew מכj) **will guard them. In the absence of cattle the trough or stable (usually) crammed** (Hebrew סוBa) **with provender is clean or void of it but there is great income from the strength of an ox.** *Solomon is saying that within the arable community you can have clean swept outbuildings but you will have no income if you do not develop your cattle and plough your fields. He is commending the work ethic.* **(4)A faithful witness does not lie** (Hebrew בזk meaning "to fail like the waters of a wadi in summer) **But a witness that colours a story** (Hebrew רqv) **will "blow through" with lies** (the concept is "he will fan the flame" of falsehood as bellows breathe life into fire) **(5)A scorner seeks spiritual wisdom and there is none but one who knows or experiences** (Hebrew t[d) (Me) **seeks for understanding** (or a mediator who offers it) **and it comes quickly or easily.** **(6)The spiritual wisdom of the subtle** (or naked) **is to act in order to understand his way but the folly of great and bound fools is to throw away** (the good) **or let fly** (at others) (Hebrew hmr) **(7) Fools mock or are derisive of "guilt" or "sacrifice for sin"** (Hebrew מva) **but between the upright is favour** (Hebrew מxr) (from God)

Joy and sadness -the here-and- now and its sequel 12-13

The heart is aware and experiences keenly the bitternesses of its soul and the stranger will not have laid ambush to or net-worked in its joy. (*The joy of the heart is as unique to the one who knows it as its bitterness-though "friends" may be made privy to both*) **The house of the terrorist or fraudster will be laid waste (as by war) but the tent of the just will be fruitful. There is present here and now** (*Hebrew vj*) a way that seems straight or upright to a man, but the last part or future (*of that way*) are ways of death. Even in smiling jest or joking the heart may be sore or pained (*Hebrew bak*) and the latter end of joy may be affliction or pain of mind (*Hebrew hgy*)

A series of characters described 14-23

(1) **The "backslider" in HEART** will be satisfied or filled with his own ways but (2) **"the good man" with his Most high or "lofty One"** (*Hebrew mj l []*) (3) **"The simple"** will completely believe every word but (4) **"the shrewd"** (*Hebrew mr [meaning "he who uncovers" things*) acts to understand well his straight way or the **"leading of steps"** (*Hebrew rva*) A spiritual (wise) man is reverent and turns aside from evil or escapes (*Hebrew rws*) from calamity (*Hebrew [r*) (5) **"A big bound fool"** has been raging and is confident. (6) **"The short of temper"** (*literally noses*) will act foolishly (7) **"the man of wicked intent"** (especially unchaste intent) will be hated. Simple ones (*those "open" like open doors to easy persuasion*) inherit folly but (8) **"the cautious"** or those who uncover (*the truth*) will be crowned with experience (*Hebrew t[d*) (*of God*) (9) **"The evil"** will bow before the face of the good and (10) **"the guilty"** or terrorists at the gates of the Righteous One. We have notice of the judgement of evil men which Solomon emphasises in *Ecc12.14* The (11) **"one that suffers want"** (*Hebrew vr*) is hated even by his neighbour and hosts of people love (12) **"the rich" man.** (13) **"He who despises his neighbour"** is sinning and he who has constantly shown grace to the humble and afflicted (*Hebrew hn [*) is happy. Will they not be definitely led astray or caused to err who work evil to the detail (*Hebrew vrj meaning "damask" evil*) But mercy and truth (*will lead*) (14) **"those who plan good things"** to the detail. In all work to fashion articles there is gain (to be made) and action of the lips (only) leads only to poverty. Words alone certainly in ancient times did not put bread on the table.

Marks of true Spirituality 24-27

The diadem of the Spiritual (wise) is their riches; the foolishness of great fools is their folly (*The Hebrew for "fool" is lya frn l [which root word means "to decline" or "turn away from" -hence perversity-so the very "perversity" of fools is their folly.*) **A witness to the truth acts to deliver souls and one who puffs out** (*cf Psalm 27.12-also Paul's testimony in Acts 9*) **lies is a fraud or deceiver. In the fear of the LORD there is trust that is strong and for His sons there is a place of refuge** (*from the avenger*) *This appears plainly to mean the "children of God"* **The fear of the LORD is the wellspring of Lives to deflect(one) from the snares of death.** *The picture here is of a bird-catcher who studies the habits of birds and sets traps when they are at rest.*

People make or break their monarchy 28

In a multitude of people is the adornment and even majesty of the king. *The greater the population the greater provisions reach the top. But in the failure or extremity of the people is the dismay or ruin of the august or morally weighty prince. It is not so much the small numbers but the fact that when the nation comes to famine or extremity the succession, however good, is put in jeopardy.*

Vices ruin society and righteousness exalts a nation 29-35

(a) **He who is "long of nose" is of great understanding.** *This transliteration is somewhat humorous but it means that long suffering relates to the appreciation of any situation of person.* (b) **He who is "short of Spirit" lifts folly high** *The expression means weak as to controlling his spirit and so soon angry* **A sound heart is the life of the flesh.** *The word "sound" is Hebrew apr which can be taken as an onomatopoeic word for the quick regular sound of stitches made by a skilled seamstress-it may also mean a "healed heart" one that is "comforted". The word apr is related to hpr which means "relaxed" so we can also say that the heart does best free of serious recurrent tensions.* **But jealousy is progressive decay to the bones.** (c) **He who injures or extorts the poor counts his maker of little**

worth. *Our attitude to the poor is as our attitude to God.* (d) **In his wickedness the evil man is overturned or thrust away and the righteous has a refuge in his death.** (e) **In the heart of the one who understands himself Spirituality (or wisdom) rests and what is in the midst (bowels) of big bound fools will be made known.** (f) **Righteousness raises up a body public or a republic (Hebrew יג as a corpse from death) and sin is a contempt or reproach to peoples or cities (Hebrew מא) (g) The kings favour is directed towards a servant of prudence (Literal Hebrew לךC which means "one who looks diligently at") and his outpoured anger will be upon him who acts to cause shame.**

PROVERBS 15

Anger containment 1-2 *We have 8 references to "the heart" in this section where we also find particularly emphatic statements of the LORD'S omniscience*

An answer of tenderness or weakness turns away hot temper but a word of hard or severe sort raises up anger. *We are advised to act with gentleness -even weakness when confronted with unjust outbursts of anger. The tongue of the spiritual (wise) will make the best of knowledge or experience (of God) or will adjust cheerfully to knowledge but the mouth of the big fool gushes forth foolishness as putrid matter (Hebrew [bn])*

Divine Watch-Care

The eyes of the LORD are in every place (Hebrew מןQm meaning "town" "village" or "habitation" or any location that man "raises up") "watching closely (as a defender on a watch-tower) the evil and the good

Healing & promotion of relationship with God is in the tongue 4

A healing or remedial (Hebrew aprm) tongue is a TREE OF LIFE but slippery "passing over" in the tongue is a wounding of the spirit. *To glide over (Hebrew plS) the facts or show no kindness to a heart in turmoil or turn away is deeply hurtful-to speak kindness is a welcome comfort a fool will insult or reject his father's discipline but he who (takes care) to observe gentle admonition will be prudent (in the sense of being "a wary watcher") In the house of the righteous is great treasure but the income of the guilty terrorist or fraudster will be trouble (wicked) (for him-the verb being a Niphal) The lips of the Spiritual (wise) sow knowledge (of God) but the heart of great bound fools does not do like that. .*

The Lord's secret intimacy 8-12

The sacrifice of the fraudulent or terrorist is abomination (Hebrew root b[t meaning "abhorrent" because illicit by its impurity) to the LORD but the prayer of the upright is his delight (That is, it is acceptable-even a "benefit" Hebrew מןXR) The path of the wicked or "guilty is abomination to the LORD. The LORD loves the persecution (Hebrew pdrM -in the sense that the LORD follows righteous persons and causes with the greatest zeal) of righteousness. Evil or calamitous discipline is for him who forsakes the public path of right. He who hates gentle discipline will die. The instruments of righteousness are inbuilt into life. The man who kicks the traces of morality courts calamity; the man who rejects out of hand any advice is headed for death. Hell and destruction are open to the LORD and "altogether" "all the time" or "on that account" (Hebrew יk pa) the HEARTS of the sons of men because the LORD can see Sheol at all times He can inspect the human heart very easily. The continuous vigil over both is also entailed. An impudent or derisive speaker does not love the one who reproves him. He will not go to the spiritual man (wise) for advice

A merry or joyful heart 13-14

A joyful heart will brighten up or bring sunshine to the face. *The Hebrew TOV is often used as a "bright morning" greeting in Israel. and by pain or TROUBLE OF HEART the spirit is afflicted THE HEART of the one who understands himself (The Hebrew is Nepal with the effect "to understand himself") will seek knowledge (of God) and the mouths of big fools pasture on folly (the idea of "greatness and pre-eminence" Hebrew לא[)*

A cheerful heart 15-19

All the days of the afflicted are evil or calamitous and he who has **A GOOD BRIGHT HEART** has a continuous feast or banquet *Such enjoy company and get lots of pleasure out of life as opposed to living under affliction which should not be allowed to be master. Better is a little with reverence for the LORD than heaps of treasure with the great storm like commotion (of the rich & voluptuous) Better is a daily ration of vegetables when love is there than a fatted calf where hatred is present. A man of hot anger will stir up contention - a man of great patience lays strife to rest The Hebrew word fqv means "tranquil" so such a mild man is one who "pours oil on troubled waters" The way of the slothful is like a hedge of sharp (thorns or stinging (nettles) but the trodden path of the just is a highway (elevated like the mound cast around a besieged city-lofty and high)*

A missing heart 20-27

A spiritual (wise) son brings joy to his father. A big fool bound (by habits) despises his mother. Folly (dreams of greatness) is joy to him who is **WITHOUT HEART** (without thought or emotions of the mind as contrition and compassion and sympathy) a man of understanding will be upright of walk or way of life. Without deliberation plans break in pieces but with a host of counsellors they rise up or come alive. Joy comes to a man through the answer his mouth gives and a word in its season or at the right time how good it is! The trodden way of Life goes up higher for those who apply the mind or those who teach or those who are circumspect (Hebrew ljkC) that he may turn away from Sheol below. The LORD will tear down or move (Hebrew jSn) the house of the proud but he will fix or settle (Hebrew bxm) the boundary of the widow. The damasked thoughts of an evil man are an abomination to the LORD but words of the pure or pure in heart or purified are sweet. He who gets unjust gain troubles his house but he who hates a present (for wrong-doing) will live.

A Righteous heart 28-33

The **HEART OF THE RIGHTEOUS** will study for an answer and the mouth of the guilty (wicked) will gush out putrid things (Hebrew [bn "like a dirty stream") The LORD is far distant from the terrorists or fraudsters or guilty ones and He will hear the prayer or song (Hebrew tlpt from llp means "to roll" on the LORD) of the righteous ones He will hear. The light of the eyes will rejoice the **HEART**. A good report or good teaching will constantly make the bones fat or strong. The ear that hears a **GENTLE REPROOF OF LIFE** will tarry or remain in the centre of wise or spiritual people.

A costly heart (Obedience)

He who neglects instruction lightly esteems his own soul but he who listens to gentle reproof comes to possess or **BUY A HEART** (Hebrew hmq) or sincere thinking or a true purpose or simply Life.

The fear of the LORD is the doctrine or discipline (Hebrew rsm) of Spirituality (wisdom) and humility belongs to the faces (or all aspects) of honour.

PROVERBS 16

Salvation by covenant mercy-man's way and God's way 1-9

The setting in order or ordering of a case or estimating and evaluating acts (Hebrew Jr [literally "stretching out in a line of priority as when placing troops for battle)) **OF THE HEART** belong to man but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. All the ways of a man are pure (Hebrew Jz as the purest oil) in his own eyes but is the examining (Hebrew lkt meaning "weighing fairly") of spirits of the LORD. Commit (Hebrew lg "roll"-bringing with it the ancient practice of moving heavy stones by putting them on wheels or circular timbers-the LORD Is that "wheel" Who will carry them to fruition) your works to the LORD And your detailed plans (Hebrew bvj of "the damask of detail") will be established . The LORD has made all things (Hebrew l [p meaning "illustrious deeds" or "products of labour" or "reward of pursuit") for his own purpose and also the guilty (or terrorist) for the day

of calamity (the NKJ has "doom" which is a good word to bring over the Hebrew h[r]) **Each who is uplifted in HEART is abhorrent to the LORD-though united "hand to hand" they will not go free of punishment. BY COVENANT MERCY AND TRUTH THERE IS ATONEMENT FOR GRAVE SIN and by the fear of or reverence for the LORD there is a turning away from evil. Because the ways of a man please the LORD even his enemies will be at peace with him. The concept of "pleasing the LORD" (Hebrew מִשְׂרָה) involves "delighting" Him; "satisfying" Him and being a "benefit" to His kingdom purposes. Better is a little with righteousness than a vast income without justice. THE HEART of a man prepares the detailed plans of his way but the LORD establishes his gradual progress and ascent (Hebrew ד[ח])**

Securing audience

Of Kings and access to the king 10-15

When an "oracle" (Hebrew מִסָּא) is on the lips of the king his mouth will not act in stealth or with treachery with regard to judgement. A just balancing or weighing and just scales (Hebrew מִזָּנָה) belong to the LORD and all the stones of the bag are his preparation. The very stones used were made by the LORD so are not to be used unjustly in business and equally the science of balance is an asset He has provided for straight business practice. It is of interest that William the Third of Orange was meticulous to establish in Holland and then in Britain the practice of fairness in weights and measures. It is abhorrent (or abominable to God) when kings commit tumult for the throne is established by righteousness. The lips of the righteous are the delight or satisfaction of kings and He (God or the king) will love the one who speaks right things. The wrath of the king (entails) messengers of death and a wise or spiritual man will atone for it. This wisdom would readily arise from being privy to David's "life of Saul" in which Solomon's father as a spiritual man appeased the wrath of Saul by his actions of prayerful song and cutting his robe. IN THE LIGHT OF THE FACE OF THE KING IS LIFE and his favour is like a cloud of March-April rain which sets forward the harvests of barley and corn that are reaped immediately afterwards.

Study of The Word of God

Spirituality & study of the Word 16-24

How much better it is to acquire or purchase Spirituality (wisdom) than eagerly sought gold; (Hebrew מִדָּבָר) to acquire understanding for oneself rather than silver. The "highway" or "ladder" of the straight is to turn from evil. The guardian of his way (of life) is the keeper of his soul. These present participles indicate the need for "eternal vigilance" Arrogance belongs to the face of brokenness and pride or insolence of spirit before stumbling reeling or sinking (Hebrew מִכְּבֹּד) Better to be on a plain of spirit (Hebrew "Shephelah") with the afflicted or wretched meek and poor than apportion the booty with the arrogant or proud. HE WHO LOOKS INTO OR TURNS HIS MIND TO THE WORD WILL FIND GOOD OR THE GOOD ONE AND THE ONE WHO TRUSTS IN THE LORD IS HAPPY. This truth stands out as a proclamation of the Holy Spirit and seems to ascend the highway of faith and fulfils the quest of the soul in God. Concerning SPIRITUALITY OF HEART he will be called "a man who understands himself or a "man of understanding." The pleasantness of the lips will add to learning The Hebrew word קִטְמָה indicates "sweetness of teaching" and that which is not just nourishing but pleasant to listen. Applying the mind is a well or FOUNTAIN OF LIFE to its husband The willingness to "look into" truth is ultimately life-giving and is here compared to a relationship so that the student of God's word, for example, is continually seeking the LORD'S mind in the word. He or she is united to such commitment. The heart of the spiritual person (wise) makes his mouth circumspect The mouth which is so helped by a heart that teaches or is prudent is one of poetry and doctrine for the Hebrew word לִשְׁכֵּם "teaching poem" comes from this root and upon his lips he increases learning or doctrine or knowledge that is grasped (Hebrew יָקַל) Pleasant words are like the overflow or dropping of honey, they are sweet teaching to the soul and healing to the bones.

Seems right but remains wrong 25-30

There is presently or "here and now" a way that seem right to the face of a man but its end is the ways of death. The soul that labours to exhaustion or toils to vexation (in work or sin) labours for

itself for he is impelled or burdened by his mouth *The requirement to feed himself drives him on* **A man of Belial** (a worthless or vile man literally "husband of destruction"-used of Satan) **digs up evil and it is on his lips like a scorching fire** which evil speaking is like a forest fire. James 3.6 affords an expression which is exactly parallel. **A changeable or perverse man sends forth strife like an aqueduct and a chatterer** (literally "one who speaks fast" *נגרן*) separates "familiar or associates. **A man of violence** (Literally "Hamas") persuades or deludes his neighbour and acts to completely cause him to go in the way that is not good. **He winks his eye to plan the detail of revolutionary or changing things, biting** (Hebrew *xrq*) **his lips he completes evil or calamity** Both actions accompany evil schemes. The first is "winking behind the back" the second nervous biting of the lips as an evil scheme finds various reactions.

Shake and He secures 31-32 (Honour patience victory guidance)

The hoary head is a diadem of glory or honour or splendour (Hebrew *trapt*) finding itself in the way of righteousness. **He who is slow to anger is better than a conquering warrior and he who rules his spirit than he who captures a city.** **The lot or inheritance is thrown down into the bosom but its whole cause or equity or all that governs it is from the LORD.**

PROVERBS 17

"Wisdom", my sister 1-5

Better is a "dry piece of broken bread" (Hebrew *tp brj*) **than a house full of feasts of strife. A servant of learning or astuteness** (Hebrew *lkc*) **will rule over a son of shame and among brothers he will have his lot of inheritance. The melting pot** (Hebrew *prx*) **is for silver and the furnace** (Hebrew *rnk-tpirc!*) **for gold but the prover or examiner of hearts is the LORD.** *The process of purification of metals is by melting. The hard hearts of men can be softened by divine providences. The process also involves continuance until in the case of silver the refiner's face can be seen in the pure silver. To obtain the pure gold of character "affliction" or "piercing pain" is entailed.* **An evil doer listens fully** (Hebrew *Hiphil of bvq*) **to false lips, a liar considers fully** (*Hiphil of nza meaning "to weigh"*) **the tongue of lust or desire** (Hebrew *hwh*) **The mocker or jester of the poor reproaches** (Hebrew *prj meaning "to think of little worth"*) **his Maker. He who cheers** (Hebrew *hmc*) **at calamity or (at others in) straits will not go unpunished or unavenged.**

The cultivation of long and beautiful relationships 6-9

Sons of sons are the diadem (Hebrew *rf* [signifies "dignity" "conviviality" and "protection"]) **of old age** (Hebrew *iqz* means "to have the chin hanging down) **and the glory honour or boast** (The Hebrew *rap* is cognate to *rab* "well" so the sons would speak of the wells that their fathers dug. The word *rap* also has a second meaning "to dig down") **of sons are their fathers. A lip of pre-eminent or remaining speech** (Hebrew *ryj* meaning "too much") **is not suited to a fool far less lips that deceive or break covenant to a prince or generous nobleman** (Hebrew *bydn*) **A beautiful stone or "stone of grace" is "the" present in the eyes of its possessor.** *Such gifts were given to free someone from punishment-as a ransom. Everywhere he turns he is successful or stops to look at it (or the reason he received it) Such a stone bespeaks how he is thought of and indeed how gracious he was to release someone who was guilty to have an opportunity of freedom and a new start.* **He who hides transgression seeks friendship but he who repeats (gossip) or a matter separates friends.** *A clear example of this occurred in October of 2008 when the shadow chancellor George Osborne repeated words concerning the possible channelling of funds to the conservative party by a Russian billionaire in the presence of Nathan Rothschild and a friend. Though he had been a college familiar of Nathan's the two split publicly when Osborne denied that an arrangement had been discussed.*

Justice grace and friendship 10-17

Rebuke (Hebrew *hr* [g [Feminine]]) **will terrify or dismay a man of understanding than a hundred strokes or blows for a great fool. An evil man will seek only rebellion or resistance therefore a fierce or daring** (Hebrew *rsk*) **messenger will be sent to him. For a bereaved bear to meet with** (*in attacking pose Hebrew vgp*) **a man is (like) being near a big fool in his folly. Who repays evil for good will not escape from calamity nor will calamity let go of his house. The beginning of strife is**

like the bursting forth of water *The idea is that strife once begun is hardly stoppable. So before the face of growing irritation (Hebrew [lq]) you must abandon or decline strife. He who acts to justify the "fraudster" or "guilty" and he who makes guilty the just are both an abomination of or abhorrent to the LORD. For why then is the selling price for the purchase of spirituality (wisdom) for which he has no love or HEART in the hand of the big fool? The LORD hates injustice but why are fools with no spiritual appetite given an opportunity to become wise? The answer to this great question has to be-"THE GRACE OF GOD" The friend loves at all times and a brother is born for distress adversity or a time of "binding up" (Hebrew rrx) The idea seems to be that when one is helpless or becomes captive to some distress or even an enemy and can be ransomed or relieved a brother is vital and will prove a singular blessing.*

Contrast of personalities 18-28

1. A man without feelings of mind as conscience and thought or reason or mediated advice shakes hands as surety pledging "down payment" (Hebrew Areba [Greek Arrabon]) for the person of his friend.
2. He who loves transgression loves a quarrel and from making his gate high invites breaking in or breaking down.
3. A man perverse or *DECEITFUL OF HEART* will not find good and a man who changes or reverses his speech will fall into calamity.
4. He who begets a great fool or scoffer does it to his own grief (Hebrew hgy) and the father of a fool (Hebrew lbn meaning "one who wastes like a skin bottle") has no joy.
5. A *HEART OF JOY* does good like a bandage (Hebrew hhg) or healing application and a frightened or crushed spirit continually dries up the bones.
6. A wicked man takes a bribe in the bosom or in the chariot (Hebrew qjj) to wrest or "lower" (Hebrew hfn) the paths public ways or traditional trodden ways of justice.
7. Spirituality (wisdom) is the face of understanding *That is, people who have mediated advice present as clearly spiritual and the eyes of a great fool are in the ends of the earth. His ideas centre on far off green fields.*
8. A scornful or great fool of a son is an irritation or vexation to his father (Hebrew S[k "makes angry") and bitterness to her who bore him.
9. Also to fine (Hebrew cn[) the righteous is not good nor to strike noblemen because of their straightness.
10. He who is aware of knowledge holds back his speech (or words of enlightenment) and a man of understanding is *REFRESHING* or cool (Hebrew rrq) of spirit. Even a fool when he keeps silent is counted wise. When he closes his lips he is reckoned to understand within or for himself (Hebrew Niphal mbn This perception is quite incorrect-though he does not comprehend he creates the contrary impression)

PROVERBS 18

The isolationist, the fool and sermons! 1-2

A man who separates himself (from others) or "lives for himself" is striving for his own desire *That is his own "wishes for himself" (sometimes of "lust", of "inclinations", of simple isolation-"dwelling by himself" as a hermit)* **He has become angry or irritated (Hebrew Hithpael of [lq) with "all of enterprise" or "all there is" even with "wealth and abundance" (Hebrew hvj) Such a person just wants to be left alone and as the text shows he or she may have a quarrel with God or life as others live it at the level of its basic purpose. Such a person may well live under the flag of fate and life without meaning. The Hithpael of "becoming irritated" shows such a state is arrived at by process. A great fool is not pleased with intelligent speeches or sermons (Hebrew hmbt cf Job 26.12 & 32.11) unless till (Hebrew ma yk) he has revealed or disclosed his own heart (Hebrew hlq)**

Beauty turns to ugliness 3

In the coming of the unrighteous contempt (Hebrew znb) also comes and with shameful deed (Hebrew mlq) reproach (Hebrew prj). *The idea of shame among the Hebrews linked with sexual*

exposure or matters of explicit sex and the word "reproach" connects with a tree denuded of leaves so when the ideas are put together shame could be described as a beautiful thing become ugly.

The power of Words 4-8

The words of the mouth of a man are unsearchable deep waters; the deeply dug wellspring (Hebrew *רַמְקָם*) **of spirituality** (wisdom) **is a gushing river or torrent** (Hebrew [*בַּן לְחַן*]) *The "bubbling" or "gushing" is an apt description of words spoken by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is not pleasant or cheering to lift up the face of the unrighteous (guilty). It is not pleasant to "extend" or "stretch out" the righteous in judgement. The procedure referred to is "keeping a trial running with the object of reaching a wrong or negative verdict against the righteous. The lips of a great fool (Kesil) will get into strife, and his mouth will call for stripes or strokes of the flail* *The NKJ has "blows" by which we might understand fools want to settle disputes with their fists. The context here suggests that the unrighteous desire the righteous to be punished with stripes. This is the punishment that our LORD received from the fearful and foolish judgement of Pilate. The mouth of a fool is his ruin. It breaks him, dismays him. The Hebrew word *הַתְּיָם* is cognate to "firepan" (same spelling) and his lips are the snare of his soul* *The fool is "seduced" by his own speech. He is strangely lured to ruin by what he convinced himself is true by often repeating it. The words of a fast-talking whisperer or talebearer (Hebrew *נִגְרָן*) are as dainties that have been swallowed quickly (Hebrew *מַיְמַחַל תַּמ* "dainties" -twice used-here and in Proverbs 26.22) those dainties that go down like a river to the inner chambers of the belly.*

Laziness 9

Yes indeed (Hebrew *מַגְיִינָה*) **he who has been declining or avoiding work or lazy** (Hebrew *הַפְרָן*) **in prescribed work** (Hebrew root *יָלַל*) **or service is brother to the "man (husband) of destruction"** (Hebrew *תַּיְיָוִם*)

Sources of strength 10-11

The name of the LORD (Yahweh) is a tower of strength. *Gesenius gives us the Egyptian equivalent which means "abundance of hills". Magdala on the shores of Galilee was named after such a tower. the tower of Babel is the first ever recorded (Gen11.4) The name of the LORD is a "fortified" tower a place of protection* **The righteous run or hasten** (Hebrew *חָרָר*) **into it and lift themselves high** *The safety involved is greater than that of Babel or the hills of Egypt-it is the protection of the Eternal* **The wealth of the rich is his walled city of strength and like a self-raised Hamath in his imagination or to his intelligence** (Hebrew *הַכָּע* meaning "idea" also "watchtower type idea") *The implication is that the city with all its human combinations of defensive capability is the chosen defence of the rich-the new Babel - but like the former Babel it will crumble when God confounds the economic set-up.*

Before and after-quite different perspectives 12-13

Before the face of brokenness or distress and calamity THE HEART of man will be exalted proud or arrogant (Hebrew *הִבְגָּה*) *The statement indicates that man will stand as proud as a tall tree or as a Babel like tower before calamity strikes* **and before the face of honour there is modesty** (Hebrew *הִמְנִיחַ*) (Proverbs 15.33, 18.12, 22.4) **He who gives back or responds to a matter before he hears it is folly** (*תְּלַמְּדָה* meaning "acting pre-eminent") **and shame** (piercing hurt *מַלְכָּה*) **to him.**

On depression 14

The spirit of a man will hold him up continually (Hebrew Piel of *לָקַח* from the root *לָקַח* meaning "hold him like a vessel" -help him endure in sickness) **But who will lift up the spirit that is rebuking itself or dejected** (Hebrew *הָקָה*) **or casting itself out?** (death wish) *The case of distressful depression where the spirit of a person has given up on life is difficult of reversal. The situation was seen in the life of Saul-a perpetually depressed man whom even David only succeeded to lift for a time.*

On development of life 15-16

THE HEART of the intelligent or "discerning one" will acquire (Hebrew *hmq* meaning "buy") knowledge (*[dy* meaning "acquaintance with the facts or with persons especially the LORD) at whatever it costs. The gift a man has performs (the creation of) expansion (Hebrew *bjr*) or width (of opportunity-literally ") for him and will lead or conduct or guide him before the faces of great people.

On principles of law 17-19

The first in his contention ("seems" or "is") right, (then) his neighbour comes and investigates (Hebrew *rqj* meaning "searches secrets!") Casting lots or returning the inheritance is the cessation of strife and a mediator or umpire will succeed to separate the mighty The lot represented the will of God and this will was the end of a matter in small issues among the Jews. A mediator, however, was vital to wider disputes among the great or people of power. So in the NT "lots" were dispensed with as the great matters to be resolved were deemed to be best resolved to all pleasing by the Holy Spirit's guidance

A brother sinned against or offended is more than a fortified city and defence in controversy or tribunals as the bars of a palace The tough resistance of one who is offended and the mounting of defence in vexatious matters are well characterised. Legal pursuit is very tedious and deeply harassing

On the power and value of words 20-21

From the fruits of the mouth of a man his inner being will be satisfied and by what goes or proceeds past his lips he will be filled over and over again. The LORD used this expression but substituted the LORD for the "man". It would seem that the normal process of intake of food is being set out but upon deeper reflection it seems that such fruit as "praise" and "kind words" are in the writer's mind. It seems that the repetitive satisfaction again is that of praise or witness to truth **Death and LIVES** are in the power of the tongue and those who love the tongue will enjoy eating and banquet on its fruit.

On friendships 22-24

He who finds or "has enough" in a wife finds what is pleasant or cheery and good and is furnished with or goes to and fro with (Hebrew *qmp*) favour from the LORD. The words of the poor are gracious words but the rich will answer harshly or cruelly (Hebrew *zz[* meaning "vehemently") A man of friends belongs to his past friendliness and there is here and now a friend that damasks closer than a kinsman. For Solomon Boaz confessed there was one closer than he but he did not love so deeply as to lose estate. Solomon makes us aware of a closer kinsman in our Shepherd who is Jehovah Roeh-the Good Shepherd of his sheep who carries the lambs in His bosom.

PROVERBS 19

Those who are slipping away from the LORD need to find renewed "purpose" -the sermon has a critical role in directing souls to the life of purpose.

Consequences of poverty and riches 1-8

Better is a poor (Hebrew *vr* meaning "dispossessed or impoverished" "driven out" or "made poor") **person who is walking in integrity of mind wholeness fullness (even prosperity) or safety** (Hebrew *mt*) **than a twisted person perverse in law who wrests a cause and he a great fool**(with extravagant ideas) **Also it is not pleasant or good that a soul be without knowledge** (Hebrew *t[d* especially of "knowledge of and relationship with God") **also he who "hastens backward" with his feet is a sinner.** This typical action which a king like Solomon would observe of persons desirous of hasty withdrawal from audience covers such action toward God also. A good example is found in the refusal of Jeremiah to withdraw under stress from ministry "I have not withdrawn myself that I should not be a shepherd" Jeremiah 17.16 **The foolishness of mankind (Adam) is the continual "slipperiness"** (Fasius by thorough examination discovered the genuine root of the Hebrew *pl* s to be "to slip away") **of his way** Solomon is speaking of the sinful habit of "escaping" or "gliding away" from God and so gradually overturn the relationship with Him. David was wary lest his foot should "slip" Psalm 17.5 2 Samuel 22.37 and the Hebrew writer warns against "letting things slip" Hebrews 2.1 and

his heart "breathes angrily" or is "morose" or "rages like the sea" against the LORD (*The Hebrew p[z means "to foam like the angry sea in turmoil" It is to be noted that God has given a limit to the sea and God's order imposes serious limits on the godless or atheist*) **Riches (Hebrew mth) or living comfortable or a state of having enough or easy circumstances causes and develops (Hebrew Hiphil of ps) hosts of friends but the weak (Hebrew l d from l l d meaning "to hang down like a willow branch or palm leaf or like a swinging door to be pushed this way and that -hence "feeble" or "pushed about") will be separated by circumstance(Hebrew drp meaning "dispersed") from his caring friends. He may keep pursuing (Hebrew pdr "to pursue earnestly") them with words that give light but they are not there. The one who acquires "affections of mind" (HEART) or "inner purpose"(Hebrew bl) loves his soul. There is he who keeps "prudent words" or "sermons" to find or discover the good or Good One**

Consequence of false witness 9

A witness of false words (cf Commandment 9) will not be acquitted or free from guilt and he who speaks falsehoods (words that fail) (the Hebrew word bzk is a picture drawn from a Wadi that disappoints) will perish or lose himself (Hebrew dba meaning "wander as a lost sheep")

Luxury 10

Pleasure enjoyment or luxury (Hebrew gn[) does not befit or suit a great fool much less when a servant is ruler over princes. It takes one who has understood life's rough places to truly appreciate luxury and one who has been accustomed to government will hardly take lessons from a slave.

Issues of temper 11-12

The shrewd consideration or attention (Hebrew l kv) of a man develops or causes (him to be) slow to anger and he will be radiant passing over transgression. We meet up with the "glow" of forgiveness in this instance-not "pride" but "warmth of affection" for "glowing " is the kernel meaning of the Hebrew word rap **The foaming anger of the king is as the growling (Hebrew shm "growling" of a young lion as distinct from the roar gav of an old lion of a lion) of a young lion but his favour is as dew on the green herb or seed.**

Family matters 13-14

A son of a fool (they) will be the calamity or ruin of (their) fathers (Hebrew nyba). Here the plural of "Father" demands that the fool and his son will both be the ruin of their respective parents. This spells doom over three generations **and the contentions (Hebrew nyd government rule or judging) of a wife are continuous or "tempestuous" (Hebrew drf)tears (Hebrew pl d of "weeping") Houses and substance are the heritage (passed on by) fathers but a prudent godly or attentive wife is from the LORD.**

Three more types of man 15-17

Slothfulness leisure or laxness is the cause of deep sleep (Hebrew mdr) and the life that is slack (Hebrew hmr meaning "letting the hands be slack". We reading in Jeremiah 48.10 "cursed is he who does the LORD'S work in a slack manner) will go hungry. He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul but he who despises or tramples under foot His ways will die. There is linkage between these expressions which means that the "ways" detailed are "God's ways" **He who is gracious to the poor is a "lender of the LORD" Each of us in every salaried month should truly take stock if we can be one of the LORD'S lenders who help others on their pilgrimage and his benefit He will repay him. The scripture shows that consideration of the poor will come back in divine benefits it may be of another or higher kind.**

In praise of discipline 18-20

Chastise your son sternly (Hebrew rsj) while there is hope and do not lift up your soul in the direction of an act of his death. Solomon is directing that nothing that would permanently injure or threaten the life of a child is to be contemplated although stiff discipline is sanctioned by this scripture. **a harsh or angry violent man will be burdened with a fine The law of Solomon actually advised**

penalising a harsh man with a fine for if you spare him you will have to add (the fine) another time. Listen to counsel and receive (Hebrew l bq "stand in front of it") discipline in order that you may be spiritual (wise) in your latter days.

Some seek their own and others God's covenant mercy 21-24

There are numerous schemes in THE HEART of a man husband or warrior but the counsel of the LORD will rise or stand. The object of longing of mankind is covenant mercy or love and better is a man poor by the loss of his means (Hebrew vr) than a liar (who may gain by deception) The fear of the LORD belongs to LIFE OR LIVES he will decline being filled with food or abundance and calamity will not visit or punish (him) The RT in English here reads, "He who has life will abide in satisfaction"-this translation requires the insertion of 4 words and overlooks "declining". The sequel affirms the theme I translate from the passage without resorting to deducing meaning. The slothful man hides his hand in a dish -truly he will not return the hand to his mouth. The sloth is a compulsive eater who waits till circumstances allow another food binge.

Rebuke has always a positive percentile rating 25

Rebuke or punish the mocker and the simple will become cautious. Issues have to be dealt with by enforcing conviction of the ringleader so that those who are drawn in may be spared. Reprove the intelligent (Hebrew mwbh) or he who discerns (himself) and he will understand the thought shown or become familiar or acquaint (Hebrew [dy] with the matter and your explanation

On the profound consequences of erring from the truth 26-29

He who attacks spoils or is violent towards his father and who puts to flight his mother is a son of shame and disgrace. Fail or omit or leave off listening to discipline and it will be to wander from words that enlighten (you) my son on relationships or knowledge (of God) There is always need to listen to instruction and rebuke or correction. To fail to take heed when corrected is to go astray in the most serious manner. A witness of Belial who is without profit or useless scorns justice and the mouth of the unrighteous swallows iniquity or moral evil. Some men care little about the possible punishment that may be meted out when their deeds become known and others drink every thought of impurity that is delivered to their countenance There are fixed judgements for mockers (i.e. those who despise the most important precepts of morality and theology) Our law outside theocracy has no such statutes but the divine tribunal of judgement has the most serious laws ready to deal with those who conduct their lives in defiance of moral probity and spiritual wisdom and beatings (Hebrew ml h) for the back (or corporal punishment) for great fools The implication is that mockers are deterred by the fixed penalty of fines and other sentences whereas fools understand the deterrent effect of nothing other than physical retribution

PROVERBS 20

Alcoholism militates against spirituality

Wine is a mocker intoxicating drink is an agitator (Hebrew hmh of "raising song or noise") Whoever wanders or errs through it will continue not to be spiritual (Hebrew Piel of mkj wise)

Preaching & the test of preaching: assurance & cleansing 1-9

The terror (Hebrew tmya meaning "dread") of a king is like the growling of a young lion. He who offends against him sins against his soul or life. It is glory for a man to cease from strife but any fool (or man of impiety) can quarrel through drinking (Hebrew [lg] The lazy man will not plough because of autumn rain (Hebrew prj) He will beg in harvest and have nothing. Counsel or divine counsel in the HEART of a man is like deep waters and a man of speeches or sermons will draw it out (Hebrew hl d) for the life of others) like water from a well. This proverb teaches us that God places his will and word in the preacher's heart by his Spirit and by the same Holy Spirit it is drawn out and presented to those in need of the water of life. The bulk of mankind will proclaim -each man his covenant faithfulness and who will find a man of truths Solomon is advising his readers to discount the glib preachers who herald themselves and seek a man who proclaims divine faithfulness and God's

truth. The righteous man has been walking in his integrity or completeness, blessed are his sons after him. A king continuing to sit on the throne of government scatters all evil with his eyes. Who will say, "My heart is continually pure" (Hebrew ytykz) "I am declared clean from my sin"? The only person who could readily do this was the leper who after a divine act of cleansing and the assurance of the high priest could make this assertion. This in effect is the answer and it is found in Mark 1.44 & Luke 5.14.

Business probity 10

Different weights (*Literally "stones" since stone weights were used*) **and different corn measures** (*Hebrew tpya of a large measure called a "bath" because it could hold a person-it was a 22litre weight*) **are both an abomination to the LORD. Even a youth will be recognised** (*Hebrew rkn "gazed at" "admired" also "alienated"*) **by his habitual or repeated actions** (*Hebrew ll [meaning "rolling on"]*) **if what he practices or attempts is innocent and pure** (*Hebrew hkz "morally pure"*) **or right.** (*Hebrew rvy meaning ethically "right"*)

The instruments of body were created for purpose-ears eyes lips 11-15
The ear that continuously hears and the eye continuously sees the LORD also constructed them both. Do not love sleeping lest you dispossess yourself (*that is, lose your possessions through seizure of assets*) **Open your eyes and there is sufficient bread** (cf **Matthew 6.11** *The phrase "Open your eyes" entails opening them and rising for work in the morning.*

"It is bad, bad" says the buyer and departing with it in his possession then he praises or celebrates (*it*) **There is here and now gold and a great volume of rubies but the lips of knowledge** (*of God*) **are utensils or vessels or tools or weapons or dress.** *Another way to express this thought would be "the 'confessing' or 'evangelising' lips are 'the' accomplishment" (i.e. of the highest value)*

On pledge & barter 16-17

Take his garment or cloak when it is barter for a stranger or enemy and take it as a pledge on behalf of a seductress or prostitute (*The Hebrew myrkn is a "feminine" singular of a "strange woman"*) *Generally Hebrew law was careful about pledges but here the cloak might conceal a weapon and the confiscation of the garment of the "foreign or godless" prostitute would punctuate her trade.* **Bread, corn or "food of deceit" or "from violating a covenant" is sweet or barter to a man** *the bread may be simply stolen or more likely pilfered and so appropriated in place of wages that a man (wrongly) imagines he should have received. I suggest the alternative to "sweet" namely "barter" first because it appears in the previous verse and second because the context is fraud and because idea of "covenant" suggests a master-servant relationship* **but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel or arrows** *when he has eaten the bread what he has done will hurt and pain him each time he eats.*

Strategic studies and dangers 18-20

Detailed plans or designs are established by counsel; in the house of cunning devices or unity of brotherhood or measured area and bands of men make war. (*The Hebrew lbj has these four meanings though in the context the primary one is "wise or cunning counsel"*) **He who walks around trafficking** (*stories*) **or as a talebearer reveals matters of consultation or intimate discourse** (*Hebrew dws*) **and you should not have had association or be familiar with one who opens his lips** (*concerning secrets*) **His lamp will be quenched or extinguished** (*Hebrew J[d]*) **by the little man of darkness.** *The "little man" is the pupil of the eye-so the loss of eyesight or the grave punishment of being blinded like Samson will be inflicted.*

Consequences of Greed 21

An inheritance gained greedily (*Hebrew ljb*) **at the beginning will not be blessed at the latter end.**

Wrong to initiate conflict without prayer 22

Do not say, "I will repay (*Hebrew mlv*) **evil". Wait for** (*Hebrew hmq meaning "twist around-indicative of prayer and relationship*) **the LORD and He will save you** *It is far preferable to turn difficult relationship issues over to God and not to deal out summary justice.*

Business integrity and justice 23

Variation in weights is an abomination to the LORD and fraudulent weights or "weighing up of cases" (Hebrew *lza*) is not good.

War and terrorist 24-26

The advancing steps of a soldier or warrior are of the LORD; how can mankind understand his way? It is a trap when a man "speaks rashly" (Hebrew *ly* "to utter at random") (to devote) that which is holy and afterwards reconsiders or examines (Hebrew *rqb*) his vows. A Spiritual (wise) king shakes out or scatters the wicked or unrighteous or terrorists Judah and Israel had two kinds of king; those who followed in the way of David and were spiritual and those who rejected this way and did evil in the sight of the LORD and turns the wheel upon them (as we would say "silences") or turns quickly upon them. As Solomon's reign opened he dealt summarily with those who might have unsettled his administration of justice.

The LORD keeps man cheery 27

The breath or life of mankind is the 'fire' or 'happiness' or 'shining candlestick' of the LORD. Man is made in God's image and his life is kept burning or bright or cheery by the LORD exploring all the inner chambers or the bowels.

Thrones sustained by righteousness 28

Covenant mercy and truth defend or watch over the king. (Hebrew *rxi* meaning "to watch as a city is guarded") and covenant mercy sustains or props up his throne. (Hebrew *d[s* meaning refreshes daily as food sustains)

Character building with age and difficulties 29-30

The pride (Hebrew *rap* "pride in self) of young men is their strength and the honour (Hebrew *rdj* "repect accorded" by others) or beauty of old men is their grey hairs or "turning grey" Grey hairs (Hebrew *byv* is a cognate word to *bwv* which indicates a turning from strength to weakness and from pride to the need for support-this "humility is the true ornament of age) Stripes or bruises cleanse or remedy by means of calamity or before calamity as do injuries or "blows received" (Hebrew *hkn*) the inner recesses of the being or bowels. Often hard things that happen prevent worse and even seeming calamities cleanse from former evil ways and likewise injuries or plagues can enable a deeper assessment of life and assist purer responses and emotions to come to the fore. All hardships can play a part in building better character

PROVERBS 21

Channels of water 1

The heart of the king is in the hand of the LORD wherever He desires (Hebrew *xpj* meaning "where He wills or pleases) He leads or turns it

Sin guilt and consequences 2-8

Every way of man is right in his eyes but the LORD examines THE HEART (Hebrew *ikt* meaning "to ponder" or "try") To do righteousness and justice is the LORD'S own choice (for us) (Hebrew *Niphal* of "choose) rather than sacrifice. "The sin" is pride of the eyes and arrogance or A HEART WIDE OPEN to all comers (Like the town square) and the ploughing of the unrighteous. "Pride" and "arrogance" and "ploughing" accompanied by ill language and harsh treatment of oxen deeply displease the LORD. The detailed plans of the sharp or diligent (Hebrew *xrj* literally "those sharp as a knife") are surely towards plenty with extra and every hasty one who hastens backward (Hebrew *xla*) is surely bound for poverty. Striving for treasures with a deceitful tongue is the perverse or corrupt act (Hebrew *l bj*) of those who seek death. The violence or extortion of the

fraudulent will sweep them to the ground (*Hebrew rrg "like sawdust from a saw"*) because they are **unwilling to do justice**. The way of the man **"laden with guilt"** (*Hebrew rzu*) is **perverse** but as for the **morally pure** (*The Hebrew word Jz is used of "pure oil"*) the **task he undertakes is** (*Hebrew larp*) **done straight**.

Of the unruly wife 9

It is better to abide in the mural tower (*Hebrew hnp of a rooftop Hebrew gg*) **than joined to a wife and house of contentious government** (*Hebrew nd*)

The graceless life 10

The soul of the ungodly desires evil; his caring neighbour will not be favoured in his eyes. *The ungodly is incapable of showing grace!*

Developing teachers of the word 11-12

By the fining (*Hebrew vn[]*) **of the impudent who scoff at religion and corrupt morals** (*Hebrew xwl*) **the simple is made spiritually wise** but to **skill up the wise** means he takes aboard **knowledge of God** *Solomon is saying that it is a caution indeed to fine a person who infringes spiritual truth but he advises that people be taught skills in the knowledge of God so that they can become prophets with the ability to promote truth. This is akin to Moses saying, "Would that all of God's people were prophets"(Numbers 11.29)The apostle Paul urges Timothy to facilitate such grasp of truth(2Timothy 2.2)***The righteous is skilled about the house and household of the ungodly overturning** (*Hebrew pl s "to cause to slip away from" or "overturn"*)**the ungodly as to belonging to evil or transforming them from evil** *The master ploy of Solomon's initiative is certainly not to fine and fill gaols or heap bodies on the streets but to understand the causes of their tumultuous and godless ways and turn or convert them to the right. Whoever shuts* (*Hebrew sfa "to bolt a lattice over a window"*) **his ears to the cry of the poor** (*Hebrew ld "feeble" "those pushed around like a swinging door"*) **will himself call out and no-one will answer. A gift in secret will tame anger** (*Hebrew hpk is used of taming a beast. Anger has been well described as a tiger-but because it is tameable it is better understood as "a wild horse"*) **and a bribe in the bosom or pocket will tame powerful rage.** *This sort of gift is not being advised to produce an unrighteous result or curry favour or achieve unfair promotion or advantage but rather to turn away wrath. It is akin to heaping coals of fire on the head of an enemy.*

Justice 13-18

It is a joy for the righteous to do justice but **"wiping out"** (*Hebrew hjm "wiping away" something written or tears or food from the mouth.)* **belongs to the architects of iniquity** **When man wanders from the way of skilled training or devout instruction** (*Heb lykv*) **he will rest in the congregation of the dead or Hades** (*Hebrew apr*) **He who loves joy for its own sake is a failed or diminished man or husband and destitute of understanding** (*Heb rsj*) **The unrighteous shall be a ransom for the righteous and the treacherous or those who "cover up" in return for the straight** *We live in a world that often demands ransom money and exchange of prisoners. The scripture plainly urges that treacherous ones shall be used to save the lives of righteous men. Here men of treachery are advised that their lives may be forfeit for those straight persons against whom they act in clandestine fashion.*

Instruction for women 19

It is better to abide in the land of the wilderness cattle plain than with a woman of dispute and provocation. (*compare with the reference in v.9*)

Covenant mercy 20-22

There is desirable (*The Hebrew word dmj is applied to "The desire of nations" in Haggai 2.7*) **treasure laid up and oil in the resting place of the Spiritual** but a **great fool consumes or loses it. He who pursues righteousness and covenant mercy finds LIFE, righteousness and honour. A wise or Spiritual man overcomes the city of the mighty and brings down the confident stronghold.**

On the tongue and attitude 23-24

Whoever watches his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from distress or pain (*Hebrew rrx*) **A proud and vain man-"scorner"** (*Hebrew xll*) **is his name-he acts in pride that passes you by-overlooks you** (*Hebrew rb*)

Other types 25-29

1. The desire of the lazy will kill him because his hands refuse to do work. *Inactivity ultimately is a killer. Work strengthens the body. All the day he has lusted after desire or obtaining (food or sexual pleasure) but the righteous will give and not restrain or withhold* *The slothful contrasts with the righteous as a person with un-harnessed desire while the righteous is characterised by "giving" or generosity*

2. The sacrifice of the unrighteous is an abomination-and more so when he comes with evil intent (*Hebrew hmz*) **(to offer it)**

3. A lying witness will get lost (*Hebrew dba*) **in wandering incoherent presentations and a man who listens to him will continue to speak in law to overcome him.**

4. An unrighteous or terrorist or man of tumult will prevail or wax strong (*Hebrew zz*) **by his facial expression but the upright (he) establishes his way of life.**

The LORD inspires the preacher 30

There is no Spirituality and no intelligent speeches or Sermons (*Hebrew hmbt*) **and no counsel before the LORD appointed** (*Hebrew dgnl*) **such or none that is any peer or counterpart to Him.**

The battle is the LORD'S 31

The horse is appointed and prepared for the day of war but salvation belongs to the LORD *The ultimate days of this era we now live in are called the "end times" and many military preparations are afoot to hopefully produce victory for those that devise them. Nevertheless the LORD who watches from the balustrades of heaven holds salvation in His hands and will come to the rescue of His people.*

PROVERBS 22

A name 1A

A "celebrated name" or simply "a name" (*Hebrew mv English "Shem" which was in the first instance a sign or stigma or mark by which a person distinguished himself*) **is greater than riches or a tithe** (*Hebrew rva*) *Whatever tithe one could give or no matter what riches one could amass a name that stands for something is greater.*

Grace 1B-2

GRACE **is better than silver and gold.** *Grace is pure; it stands out; it has lasting value. Rich and poor cause themselves to meet* (*Hebrew vgp meaning "rush to meet as Moses and Aaron Ex 4.27) (in this); the LORD made them all*

Avoiding calamity 3

A crafty or shrewd man (*Hebrew mnr*) **foresees calamity and conceals himself or shelters from it but the simple ones pass through it and are taxed or lose money** (*Hebrew vn*)

Personal religion and Jacob (Jacob's experience is crucial to preaching the O.T.) 4

Jacob like action (*Hebrew bq*) **by "wrestling" or "supplanting" or "taking by the heel"(i.e. struggle) and by answering (God) (Hebrew hn) or humility and submission and by fear of the LORD** (*Hebrew ary meaning "reverencing" or "trembling with joy "before Him*) **are riches and honour and LIFE** *There is no other way than Jacob's way to obtain these three ends together. True riches which entail tithes and true glory and true godly fear only come the Jacob way. All great bible writers go back to this fountain of faith-David who speaks often of the God of Jacob, Moses who emphasises Penuel (our coming to Peniel personally)and Isaiah in Isaiah 9.8 "The LORD sent a word*

to Jacob and it lighted on Israel" This deep recognition of the roots of personal religion are present in Solomon's writing everywhere and entitle him to be a preacher of God's grace.

Pain and traps come by perversion 5

Thorns and snares are in the way of the perverse or guilty (*Hebrew vq[]*) **He who watches his soul will be distanced far from them** *Being trapped and hurt in life is linked deeply to twisting and perversion of mind and speech; to changing from what is valid what one says and altering one's way of life from what is circumspect.*

Training of children 6

Initiate or consecrate (*Hebrew Jnj meaning "give (a child) a taste" or "narrow" hence to "Put something sweet in his mouth" or set him on his pathway*) **for a youth towards the mouth of his way of life or "narrow his pathway". Even when he is an old man he will not depart from it.** *The "New Open Bible"(NKJ) which lies on my desk has a footnote here entitled "A prescription for rearing children". It captures three concepts from the Hebrew word above-"Dedication" "Instruction" and "Motivation"-the Arabic equivalent which apparently refers to "stimulating the palate of the new-born babe so that it will take nourishment" In this practice we can see the value of the Hebrew expression above. Parents are to create a desire within the child to do what God wants.*

Lending & borrowing 7

The rich rules over the dispossessed or impoverished and the borrower is servant to the lender (*Literal Hebrew hwl "the joiner is servant to the man to whom he joins himself". The word is cognate to "Levi" which means "joined to the LORD"*)

A contrast of the just and compassionate 8-9

He who sows injustice will reap vanity sorrow and calamity and the sceptre or support of his outpoured anger will come to an end. *This has to do with persons who gain power or "the sceptre" and act unrighteously. The Hebrew word hl k is suggestive of "self-destruction" with its meaning "wasting its own strength" The good or kind eye (the eye of welfare) will be blessed for he gives to the poor from his food.*

Sack the scurrilous ; cultivate the pure 10-11

Drive out (*Hebrew vrg meaning "drive out as cattle" or "divorce as a partner" or "expel as an enemy"*) **the impudent and contemptuous person ("scoffing"-the Hebrew is xwl which is used with respect of morals and religion) and "that which is contended for" will end or go (away) and shame or shameful deeds and controversy will cease or be taken away.** *Solomon advises leaders to source people who despise the upright status quo when they cross the line of what is acceptable and release them from their duties.*

He who loves purity of heart (*Hebrew rhf meaning "brightness" or "purification by blood sacrifice"*) **and grace of lips will be a companion or friend of the king.**

God defends the right 12

The eyes of the LORD watch to defend acquaintance with or knowledge of (Him) but He overthrows the words about action (*Hebrew rbd*) **of the covert or oppressor.**

Alibis of the lazy man 13

The lazy man says, "There is a lion outside round the house in the middle of the street" "I will cause myself to be crushed or dashed to pieces" (*if I go out*)

The long delayed anger of God eventually falls 14

The mouth of the harlot (*Hebrew hrz*) **is a deep pit.** (*The Hebrew hjwv is cognate to tjv which means sepulchre*) **The foaming indignation of the LORD of long in the past** (*Hebrew past participle of "foaming" [m[z]*) **will fall there.** *The thing to notice is that the LORD has been long angry but after a time judgement falls upon the harlot. [cf chapter 7 vv21-23 to solve the query on Solomon being "privy" but not "party" to the outcome]*

Youthful "folly" 15

Foolishness (Hebrew root ל#א "to be big" or "pre-eminent") is **bound up** (Hebrew רvq meaning "a strong confederate" "like a brother" or "like a belt". The word *Kesil* refers to a "big or bound" fool and the word *Nabal* to a "fading" or "vile and abject" state [like the state of a flower before death]) **in the heart of a youth but the rod of discipline will distance it far from him.**

Extortion and sycophancy criticised 16

The one who extorts the poor to increase his interest or usury and the one who gives to the rich will come to want or poverty Whilst unfair rates of interest are grossly unfair so is it unwise of the poor to give unnecessary gifts to the rich.

SECTION 3 22.17- 23.14

The Egyptian section

THIS SECTION MIRRORS WISDOM FOUND IN AN EGYPTIAN TEXT BY AMEN- EM -OPE. WE DO WELL TO REMEMBER THAT SOLOMON HAD AN EGYPTIAN WIFE AND TRADED CONTINUOUSLY WITH THE SOUTH. THERE ARE TWO CLEAR REFERENCES TO THE "LORD" IN THIS SECTION DESPITE THE ALLEGED SOUTHERN SOURCE. IT IS ALSO HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT THAT A REFERENCE TO WRITING SENT TO AN UNNAMED CORRESPONDENT IS REFERRED TO (vv19-21). IT IS POSSIBLE TO READ THE TEXT IN TERMS OF SOLOMON'S EXPLANATION OF THE FAITH TO AN EGYPTIAN. THOUGH "THE EXODUS" WAS 400 YEARS BACK LINKS WITH EGYPT WERE CORDIAL AND SOLOMON WHO RECEIVED QUESTIONS FROM ALL OVER THE EARTH-ESPECIALLY THE SOUTH-DOUBTLESS RECEIVED MANY FROM EGYPTIANS. CF THE VISIT AND QUERIES OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA. IT IS WHOLLY POSSIBLE THAT SOLOMON INCORPORATED SOME OF THE WISDOM OF EGYPT HERE JUST AS MOSES BENEFITTED FROM THE LEARNING OF THE EGYPTIANS-BUT THE RECIPROCAL TEXT IS ALMOST COMPLETELY GIVEN TO 13 COMMANDMENTS WHICH LIE ALONGSIDE WHAT APPEARS TO BE SOLOMON'S ENCOURAGEMENT OF A.N. OTHER TO FAITH IN GOD.

Evidence (v.20) that Solomon entered into spiritual correspondence (cf S.Rutherford's letters)

On the use of "wisdom" embedded in proverbs 17-21

Lower your ear and listen to the action-words of the Spiritual (or wise) ones (See LXX for new section) and **direct your heart to become acquainted with me for it is pleasant if you keep them within your inner being. Let them be appointed or set up permanently together on your lips.** The advice given here may come from those who gathered the proverbs on a variety of topics and it is suggested that the reader learn and use these sayings which have all enough significance for the spiritual man to be committed to memory and appointed for regular use. **It belongs to this being so that your faith is in the LORD. I have made you familiar (with them) today- Yes you-even more familiar!** The writer is addressing the reader or learner and stressing that every new day of learning means a greater grasp of this body of wisdom. **Have I not written to you formerly or three days ago in matters of advice or consultation and knowledge or acquaintance** The stock of proverbs now accumulated relates to persons with whom one can safely consult and those with whom it is unwise to do so. It also respects familiarity with those in the community and its advisability or otherwise **To cause you to know to divide aright** (Hebrew fvq which like hvq means to "plain or turn wood" so the worth of a proverb is that it is like a piece of turned wood ready for use) **words of truth to answer or return words of truth to those who sent to you (for help)**

Seven Prohibitions of Spirituality 22-28

(1) **Do not strip off or spoil or rob the poor because he is weak or reduced.**

(2) **Do not oppress or crush the spirit of the afflicted in the gate (i.e. in judgement) for the LORD will strive in their contention and rob the soul that robs them.**

(3) **Do not make a friend of an angry man.**

(4)And do not go with a hothead (Hebrew תַּמְּי "a man of rages" or "fits of temper") lest you become familiar with his trodden ways or habits and take a trap for your soul

(5)Do not be people who strike hands (Hebrew [q̄t meaning "strike a bargain" or agreement-which was sealed by striking the hands) in surety or barter for a debt. If there is nothing for you to repay why should he take your bed from underneath you?

(6)Do not remove the age-long boundary or margin of your territory (Hebrew מְלִאָּה lbg boundary of an age) which your father has created.

A man of expedition or skill gets a good job 29

Do you see a man who is quick prompt and skilful in his ministry or service or sending messages; he will take a position before kings; he will not take a position in the service of mean ignoble and obscure men. The man who can speedily execute his work or forward what is ordered with promptness will ascend to gain prestigious appointments.

PROVERBS 23

Behaviour in court & it's relevance for emphases at the LORD'S table 1-3

When you sit down with a ruler really understand (Hebrew "understanding understand") what belongs to your turning away your face. The advice is not to understand the menu or to understand when to smile but to understand not to turn away or turn your back on the monarch. This is a useful word in connection with the LORD'S table. We are to understand not just the meaning of the bread and wine but we are primarily to be in a right relationship with our LORD And set a knife at your greedy throat or swallowing if you are a man of "self" or one that is a heavy drinker. In the presence of a ruler moderation is required and due respect for the dignity of others not considerations of self. This too is a lesson for Christians-our lives need to be moulded by his not our own will and be temperate in all things.

May this poor self grow less and less and all things else recede

May Jesus Christ be all in all- for this I daily plead

(1)Do not cause yourself to desire more and more of his tasty trifles for this is food that will not last or will fail. The ruler will have no further interest in you or your services if you indulge in his tasty meats to excess and so the one meal will spell the end of relationships and it will be back to basics.

Supping with the rich & Deceitful riches 4-5

(2)Do not keep on racing to be rich(Hebrew חָט "running like a gazelle")because of your understanding cease or leave off or decline (to run)The word decline Hebrew לָדַךְ means both "to cease" and to be frail" so fully interpreted this saying would run "Slow down from an understanding of this frail world and your own transitory life in this world" Will you take birds eye view & fly to get it and then there is nothing for riches make for themselves wings and fly like the eagle into the heavens The folly of flying at full speed for what you think in a birds eye moment is a big prize is made evident in the second ornithological metaphor for riches "create" wings and take off beyond reach into thin air. Tillotson puts it, "He expresses it as if a rich man sat brooding over an estate till it fledged and got wings to fly away."

Supping with the miser 6-8

(3)Do not eat the bread with an "envious" or malignant man (cf Proverbs 28.22) (Hebrew מַיְ [r literally "of bad of eye")

(4)And do not desire his delicacies for as he "sets a price or estimate"(Hebrew רָ[ׁ] in his soul so he is That is, he is always reckoning up how little he can provide. He will say to you, "Eat and drink" but his heart is not with you. He does not want you to eat or drink a lot because he is a miser. The little you have eaten you will vomit up (Hebrew אִמָּק like תִּמָּק "pelican" from its habit of vomiting up food gorged down) and spoil your pleasant words The meal would be so prepared from possibly stale

or long stored unsafe foods that it would make you sick and all the polite words you spoke on being received would have to be qualified by words about the "nature of the food".

Sermons are not for fools 9

(5) Do not give an ordered discourse or set out a plan in the ear of a great fool for he will despise your prudent or circumspect elegant discourse (*Hebrew llm "that declared" or "spoken eloquently"*)

Respect for boundaries 10-11

(6) Do not remove the boundary or limit of a long age *This expression was used in 22.28 and first appears in Deut 19.14 & 27.17. And do not come into the territory of the fatherless* *This is a statement warning against infringement against the poor. It has to do with the LORD'S care of the needy for their kinsman redeemer is mighty and He will take up their cause against you*

Training requires a good ear and an interested mind 12

Cause your heart to come for instruction -both doctrine and discipline and give ear to enlightening words of knowledge (of God)

Correcting a child 13-14: End of the Egyptian section

(7) Do not restrain or hold back correction or sturdy discipline from a youth for if you strike or hurt him (*Hebrew hkn*) **with the rod he will not die. You shall beat him with the rod and deliver his soul from Hell** *The rod or cane was applied to the body -both hands and legs of boys at school in the 1950's in Britain without objection from parents. The days were sterner and there was no deviation from school discipline. Expulsions were unheard of and parents were not at odds generally with what then was considered normal correction. A rod was kept at home in my uncle's family and brought out as required. It was not used harshly but it was more effective as a short sharp shock than putting children to bed or holding threats over them for hours. Scripture here is speaking of "youths" who are just under or have reached double figures of age and not small children. The rod is not for general use but for very undisciplined youths who would otherwise go on the path to ruin. In a politically correct society a court case might be instigated by the application of this rule.*

SECTION FOUR 23.15-24.23

THIS SHORT SECTION BEGINS WITH A SERIES OF COMMANDS WHICH FIT THE PARENTAL SITUATION AND THAT OF THE SOPHERIM EQUALLY WELL

Wise children give joy -Paternal instructions 15-25

My son if your HEART is spiritual (*wise*) **MY HEART will shine for joy-yes I myself will rejoice and my inner being will exult or triumph** (*Hebrew xl* [*l*]) **when you speak the things that are right** *It is a "victory" when young men can give an ordered discourse on "making the way straight" or ""righteousness".*

(1) Do not let your heart be provoked or jealous on account of sinners but let it be in awe of the LORD all day long (*Here the Hebrew mny is metaphorical for "a lifetime"*) **for surely there is "here after" and your hope is not to be cut off** *Scripture is clear-"eternity" or "remote time" is set in man's heart (Ecc 3.11)* **Hear my Son and be spiritual** (*wise*) **and direct your heart straight in the way** (*or righteousness*)

(2) Do not be with the ones intoxicated or drunken (*Hebrew abs*) **with wine or like the prodigal squanderers of meat for the glutton and the squanderer will be made poor or dispossessed for slumber or "light sleep"** (*Hebrew hmmm*) **will clothe a man with rent garments** (*Hebrew [rq]*) **Hear your father-this very one who begot you.**

(3) And do not despise your mother when or because she is old.

(4) Buy the truth and do not sell -also buy spiritual wisdom and doctrine -cum-discipline and understanding by mediator.

The father of the righteous will go round in exulting circles and he who bears a spiritually wise son will rejoice in him. Your father and mother will rejoice and she who bore you will actively rejoice.

Separated to God or seduced -two paths for the heart 26-28

"My son give your HEART to me and let your eyes watch or observe (Hebrew רחמ) my way"

For a harlot is a deep pit and a strange woman a narrow well. She also ambushes as one catching prey and she adds to the "faithless" "treacherous" and covert ones" among mankind. *The choice is so often between pleasure or love which is of a self serving and fleshly sort and a deep love for God-the choice between EROS and AGAPE. As ever out of the heart are the issues of life.*

A purple passage on the excesses of wine 29-35

Who has wailing woe or lamentation? (Hebrew ימא a cognate of "lust, turning aside"); **who has misery or poverty or wretchedness?** (Hebrew ימבא a cognate of "inclination, wishes")**who has strife**(Hebrew מיימדם a cognate of "depression" -also used in Genesis 6.3 where the Spirit of God is said to "strive" with man but also is "grieved" and has been for 2000 years-so we must ask, "how long can this grief and this age last?) **Who has a quarrel? Who has wounds without need or cause?** (Hebrew [xp-the sort of" wound" Isaiah describes in Isaiah 1.6 or wounds like that which Lamech feared-i.e. a "deadly wound")*The question could be answered in one word, "Jesus"-for His wounds were gratuitous or gracious too-but they had an efficient cause-"the love that would not let us go"* **Who has dark flashing or fierce eyes?** (Hebrew לכ meaning "be-dimmed" and "fierce") (This all) **belongs to those who linger or remain long at wine, to those who take spiced up wine** (Hebrew יסמ "wine mixed with spices such as myrrh and opiates)

(5) Do not look to choose for yourself (Hebrew חר) wine when it becomes red when it creates fountains in the cup, when it makes its way straight (to the brain) Its afterward or sequel -it will bite like a serpent.(Hebrew ימ which means "to bite" and "to take usury" so it continues to abuse) **and it will disperse like the sting of a hissing viper** *The fast and deadly dispersing of intoxication (Hebrew ורפ) and the foaming sound of liquor are both combined here in a vivid portrayal to great effect* **Your eyes will see strange things** *Things "foreign" to normal vision* **and your heart will utter a series of changed or brandishing (Hebrew יפ -like "flashing swords")words. You will be like one who lies down to sleep in the middle of the ocean! Or like one who lies asleep at the top of a ship's mast or rigging!** (Hebrew לב) **They struck me but I was not sore; they beat me to pieces and I did not know it** (Hebrew מלח meaning "to hammer") *Here are some sad and quite funny scenarios which highlight not alone the bravado but the sheer folly and tragedy of drunken inebriation. It may be that these scenes are not just imaginary-for Solomon had merchant sailors and no doubt some of them fell to their death from ships on account of having imbibed too much wine.*

PROVERBS 24

"Wisdom" builds & fills the house 1-4

(1) Do not burn with jealousy anger or envy on account of fleshly men of evil and calamity.

(2)Do not desire to be in their company for they will growl in their heart for destruction and their lips will talk of wickedness or vexation.

By spiritual wisdom a house will be built and by understanding it will (eventually) have been established. *Spiritual people who keep close to the LORD and people who are directed by his Spirit, His Son and His Word will look to the future with vision. Their family life will grow and their families will be established* **And with "learning" the inner chambers or storerooms (Hebrew רד) are filled with all riches both precious and pleasant.**

Solomon initiated an international strategy with the zeal of a general at war 6

A warrior (Hebrew רב) of spiritual wisdom stands in heroic fortitude or firmness and a man of learning or knowledge (often but not exclusively of "knowledge of God") is alert and swift in strength or productive power (Hebrew יכ) For in leagues or binding covenants you will make your war and in greatness of counselling there is salvation *The phrase is used in 11.14 and 15.22 and I prefer the reading "By the greatness of counselling" (Hebrew יכ) because not the multitude of them but the superior source of wisdom from which counsel emanates is in view) Solomon is setting out his strategy*

as a statesman. He prepared with the zeal and mapping of a strategic planner in war how to take to his side nations and peoples. Unhappily a large part of this strategy was inter-marriage and though his bonds of covenant were thus cemented unless the added stock were converted to the LORD he was taking to himself foreign religion which did not sit well with theocracy. In concubinage by covenanting his own care of foreign princesses he secured control of their destiny for a time but this strategy had in it the seeds of future ruin.

Impiety does not make effective leaders 7

Spiritual matters are sublime to a fool (Hebrew *lwa* "impious" or "stomach"[the kind of foolishness that is all food] as opposed to the "fading fool" Nabal of Psalms 14 & 53) **he does not open his mouth in the gate** (as a counsellor he is useless)

Call sin "sin" 8-9

The designer of evil will be called a "husband of contrivance" or "unchaste husband" (Hebrew *mmz*) **Contriving impiety is sin and the scoffer is abhorrent to mankind or an abomination belonging to the human race.** In these latter days impiety is next to lionized but in the LORD'S eyes it remains abhorrent.

Attitude to Persecution 10-12

If you have become feeble in the day of adversity your ability to exert yourself is narrow or limited. It is "pressure" that tests the strength we have. Hostile persecution and distress will either bring out strength or manifest weakness. **Deliver those who are taken to die and look or would that you would save or restrain those tottering to their death. If you say, "We personally did not know this" does not He who examines or ponders hearts understand? And the keeper of your soul does He not know? And will He not requite mankind according to its deeds (or) a man individually for those deeds he attempts and prepares** (Hebrew *l[p]*)

Spirituality and the future 13-20

My son eat honey because it is good and honey dropping from the comb because it is sweet to your palate so shall the learning of spiritual wisdom be to your soul. If you have discovered it there is an "afterward" or "a future" and your hope will not be cut off.

(3)Do not lie in wait, O wicked one, against the resting place of the righteous

(4) Do not destroy or lay waste his quiet home! (Hebrew *zbr*) **For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise but the wicked will sink together in calamity** (The righteous may fall or fail of purpose [Hebrew *lpn*] whereas the wicked will fall from weariness or seduction [*lvk*] or from a wholesale weakness)

(5)Do not rejoice in the fall (failed purpose) of your enemy and when he staggers in wholesale weakness

(6)Do not dance in exultation lest the LORD see it and it be evil in His eyes and He turn his wrath away from him. The LORD does not permit triumphalism and may indeed do good to those who for the meantime we might count enemies.

(7)Do not become angry (Hebrew *hrj*) **because of the evil doers**

(8)Do not be jealous or envious (Hebrew *hnq*) **because of the wicked (guilty or tumultuous) for there will not be a "future" or "afterward" for the evil man and the lamp of the tumultuous will be extinguished** (Hebrew *J[d]*)

Avoid shifty men 21-22

My son, fear the LORD and the king; do not become a familiar with those who change- for their heavy burden or misfortune or calamity (Hebrew *dya*) **will rise at the opening of the eye** Both the "rising" and the "opening of the eye" are pictures derived from awaking in the morning. So "calamity dawning with daylight" is the meaning **and who knows the calamity or affliction that these two can bring?** In other terms, "Who knows what a day may bring? And who knows what our eyes shall behold that instigates ruin or is awaiting our waking eyes?"

SECTION FIVE 24vv23-34 A Preacher's delight

These things also belong to the spiritually wise: 23-27

It demands deeper insight to focus the permanent value of the proverb that follows

(a) It is not good to show admiration for faces in judgement *One can perfectly well admire people in a neutral situation but when one is judging between persons favouritism has no place. He who says to the guilty "You are righteous"-him the mother cities or peoples will curse or pierce (Hebrew *bqñ*)*

This is a rather special statement because as contextually interpreted it relates to unfair preferential treatment but interpreted alongside the main bible message it relates to Christ who was "cursed" or took the curse because He died to make the guilty who trust Him righteous. Metropolitan cities or peoples will be angry on account of nations This is not just a general case-it is one of international significance and the Person involved attracts anger on account of His care of the Gentiles. It is inevitable that we should see Christ here-Christ in Proverbs as the Justifier or sprinkler of many nations. The cities of Jerusalem and Rome in particular were angry with Christ and His followers.

(b) But belonging to "those that make clear or contend for "(the pierced one) or figuratively "those who are in the sunshine" (Hebrew *j ky*)of the pierced one there are delights or beauty and brightness or grace & favour (Hebrew *m[ñ]*) and upon them will come the blessing of the Good One. *The scripture envisages revelation and joy and grace and blessing for those who stand with the one who bears the curse.*

(c)He who replies in straight words or brings back a message in straight words will kiss the lips. *An honourable messenger will show genuine affection. This relates to Judas to whom Jesus said, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" The Hebrew verb "to kiss" is *qvñ* which means "to adjust oneself or submit" in fidelity. Judas chose a sign of fidelity as a signal of betrayal. The ancient proverb is accurate of Judas who was loyal to his promise to the priests but not to Christ. Mark 14.45 records that he "kissed Jesus affectionately *κατεφιλησαν**

(d)Prepare your outside ministry or service or mission on which you are sent and keep ready or on destiny in the field as befits you and afterwards build your house. *This is putting first things first-it is seeking first the kingdom. The farmer first sows and harvests -so should we enter into His Kingdom's seedtime and harvest and thereafter consider household matters-so Christ says, "He who loves father or mother or wife before me is not worthy of me." Judas put estate & house first*

More commands & instruction for the spiritually wise 28-34

(e)(9)Do not be gratuitously a witness against your neighbour and lay yourself open with your lips or "plough things up" with your lips *This command also has a bearing on the action of Judas. The peril in which he placed himself was exactly because he broke the 9th commandment. Love for ones neighbour is seen in our speech*

(f)(10) Do not say, "I will do to him as he has done to me" "I will return to the man according to his planned action". *To avoid this reaction forgiveness is needful and the attitude that says, "Do to others as you would they should do to you" This concept approaches the NT Ethic*

(g) I passed along a field of a lazy man and to a vineyard of one man without heart or affections (i.e. a man of hard heart) and behold it grew up full of thorns, its face hidden by nettles. Its surrounding stones (wall) were broken down. And I looked upon it with affection (Hebrew *hñj*) and set it upon my heart or affections. I looked on it prophetically to take for myself a lesson for myself *The vineyard features exactly thus in the story Jesus told. He "loved it" and came to occupy it and make it productive again. At the end of days He will return to His vineyard yet again and take away the hurtful things and restore its breaches and establish himself in place of its meantime tenants.*

(h)A little dream a little slumber a little embracing of the hands to sleep (Hebrew *bkv*) (with a partner) or folding of the hands to rest and your poverty will come as a man who is wandering about or a vagabond (Hebrew *Jlh tm*) and your want or being without as a "man with protection"(Hebrew *ngm vya*) who comes as a thief. *The only thing a person requires to be poor is to do nothing and the only thing a soul needs to do to be lost is to be asleep as to the claims of Christ. The result is "wandering" and in respect of salvation -to despise it is to be in danger of the coming of Christ as a thief or the coming of death equally suddenly. Here we come to the end of eight most instructive spiritual lessons which the writer sets down under the title "Things that belong to the Spiritual"*

PROVERBS 25

SECTION 6 CHAPTERS 25-29

A section Vital to understanding the overall purpose of "Proverbs" and its outworking

Proverbs copies by "the men of Hezekiah" 1

These also are the proverbs of Solomon which the men (*Hebrew vna with a possible connection to "men who were ill" or had been "wounded" or "sorrowful" simply "men" but not in the sense of "strong men"-this usage is of great interest as placed beside "Hezekiah" which means "the LORD" takes hold of" or "strengthens" or "binds Himself fast to " or "adheres to") of Hezekiah king of Judah "transferred by new written copy"(Hebrew qt[) and "set free" [or made widely available] from one book to other(s) There now follow five chapters of Proverbs or "sentences" which by nature stand in their own right. These sayings or "bywords" are like the NT sayings of Christ παροιμια " -they are literally "neighbours" in the human mind-they become "familiar" and are used time and time again in conversation. They are woven into the essence of conversation as ingeniously representing wisdom. This is the special ministry of Solomon and of Christ that they lastingly influenced human language by these maxims or epigrams which became the parlance of many nations where the bible is known. Part of every Christian's task is to bring the Proverbs out of cold storage to do for English and other languages what Solomon succeeded to do for Hebrew-to "spiritualise" language and revive its power to communicate God's wisdom*

God is sovereign, kings keep counsel privy 2-3

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter but the glory of kings is to investigate search out and examine a matter. *The unknown beginnings and future of our world and the unknown future provenance of our lives are in God's hands. This is the strength of the triune God and His glory-to keep the detail of developing history to Himself. Kings and rulers desire to search out every matter and get on top of the facts. The "national press" is part of this and especially the "secret services" of each nation. The heaven for loftiness of distance, the earth for depth of valley and of the heart (reasoning or finer emotions such as hatred fear love joy sorrow) of kings there is no searching or examining. Monarchs relish remaining in a bubble of mystique and cultivate distance between them and the public largely for reasons of pride and safety. The LORD is naturally hidden because His ways are so far removed from ours and he hides secrets for reasons of government and grace.*

Vessels and service 4-7

Separate the base metal (*Hebrew mygys*) **from silver and it will go to the silversmith for silver vessels. Separate the tumultuous from the presence of the king and his throne will be established in righteousness.** *The refinement of our base lives by Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit is creating in us His image and making us into "vessels for His use"*

*Vessels only blessed Master, but with all thy wondrous power
Flowing through us Thou doest use us every day and every hour.*

Do not do yourself honour or adorn yourself in costly attire before the king and do not stand to minister in the position of the great for it is better that he says to you, "Come up here" than that you should be lowered before the face of a prince whom you spotted [lower than you] whose place you have taken. *The "prince" (Hebrew bdn) is the "one ready to become king"-to take his place would be a major indiscretion. Under the gospel all things are different-the prince has "humbled Himself" and given us a place upon the throne so that we are priests and kings to our God*

Neighbours and news 8-10

Do not go hastily or rashly (*Hebrew rhm*) **to contend in law besides what will you do afterwards when your neighbour has caused you to be disgraced** (*Hebrew mlk*) **and do not keep opening the secret to another lest he who hears it keeps bringing you into contempt and the creeping repute of slander never turns away or back from you.** *It is assumed that behind strife there is some "familiar acquaintance" or "verbal deliberation" of which the inner truth is known to both contestants at law.*

Should it come out it would lastingly blight the reputation of the one who has caused the offence. It was far better to settle with the party immediately involved. Jesus rehearsed this wisdom in Matthew 18.17 and in Matthew 5.25.

Words and situations 11

I have selected art work for the cover of this commentary that is based on the Proverb because Solomon sent out his Proverbs with spiritual intent that they would beautify renew and cleanse the fountain of human communication

A word spoken "on its wheel" or "quickly" or "in its own time" so "appropriately" is "apples of gold in settings in "firm frames"(Hebrew Jvm) of silver Words like apples have a specific season and words need to be held tightly in tension as a painting of apples in a firmly fixed frame. The setting of words is important -that it be a refined setting and that words be thus gracious as well as beautiful and appropriate. The basic reality of words as "pictures" was well understood and employed usefully by Solomon. He was a real wordsmith and his proverbs were geared to spiritualising his whole society at the fountain of its converse.

Counsellors and counsel 12

Like earrings of gold (Hebrew bhz) and a necklace (Hebrew ylj) of precious gold (Hebrew mtk) is a man of spiritual wisdom who gives reproof (Hebrew jky meaning 'one bringing [into the sunshine]) to a listening ear. One has to look at the comparison for the spiritual truth. First, the jewellery is an ornament to the ears and the jewellery is constantly worn. Anyone who brings your life and mine into the sunshine on any tedious matter and sets before us the glory of revelation is a valuable person. Such a person is "pure gold" and should be given access at any time to advise us. A necklace is worn about the neck and like earrings is generally the jewellery of a lady. Usually the two items correspond but here the second is of the richer gold. The neck is often associated with rugged or sullen objection to counsel. A counsellor whose rebuke is received by the "stiff-necked" is to be highly esteemed indeed. The Counsellor needs to gain the ear but also be able to address the will and the heart to achieve his aims. What is heard may go in one ear and out the other unless the heart is changed. There is a set of objectives to be gained as there is a set of jewellery worn.

Messengers and Missionaries 13

As the cold tumbling down of snow (Hebrew mx[cold] from lx[tumbling down) in a day of harvesting is a faithful circuit messenger (Hebrew ryx) (or one who "betakes himself to the way" cf Joshua 9.4) to those who commissioned him ;he restores the soul of his masters. This also has application beyond business-the faithfulness of gospel messengers who face all trials in all weathers-sowing in the morning noon and the dewy eve pleases the LORD of the harvest and thrills God's heart.

Givers and Giving 14

Vapour clouds and wind without rain -so is the man who boasts (Hebrew lh literally "to shine") falsely of himself as to giving. The LORD gives bountiful showers which produce seed in the earth. But wind and cirrus clouds promise no fertilising showers. A man who fails to support the work of the LORD is like the wind and his boast mirrors no harvest. The LORD is not impressed by those who want to "shine" He loves a cheerful giver.

Patience and persuasion 15

By long patience a judge magistrate military commander or leader will have been rendered intensely open to persuasion and a gentle or tender (Hebrew Jkr) tongue by itself shatters a strong bone. "Treasury" has "a soft answer will often accomplish most difficult things" How such a soft spoken tongue could accomplish this feat does not require to be spelled out. Clearly a quiet command of a king could effect it through a third party. The persuasion of a tough lawyer or hardened army commander requires patience and time. The soft tissue of the tongue and the hard mass of the bone are contrasted but because the tongue executes the legislative function of the brain it is of superior power

Of pleasant discourse 16

Have you found honey; eat sufficient lest you satiate yourself on it and you vomit it up in one go.

To discover honey is akin to discovering someone who is good to talk to. However, conversation should be line upon line and learning by discourse has to be in short dosage. That is why universities employ the technique of lectures so that the student can take in the maximum quota of learned material at a sitting. The same principle applies to Christian discourse and the sermon.

Visiting 17

Be one who rarely sets foot in your neighbour's house, lest he eventually has enough of you and will come to hate you. *Visits to neighbours should be infrequent lest proximity be taken for familiarity and there be a collision of life style. The word "rare" also means "precious" and so such visits when they do occur are quite special and appreciated.*

The danger of untruthful speech 18

A man who answers with false witness against his neighbour is a hammer, a sword a sharp arrow. *The falsehoods may be perpetrated by many hammer blow references or by one terrible thrust or by firing a random statement which lands far away but has wide impact. So whatever the manner of false speech its effect will ultimately be real. The world is but a village.*

Take care in making confidants! 19

Confidence in a fraudulent or perfidious man in a day of trouble is like a bad tooth or a foot that totters or trips. *When there is difficulty the fraudster is far away. Even on a good day such a deceiver is a broken reed. A bad tooth causes pain and is best extracted-so is a fraud best taken out of your list of friends. A foot that is made to vacillate is one which sways or dithers and the lesson is to stop dithering and walk steadily with better companionship.*

Don't let sadness prevail 20

As the one who takes off a garment on a winter's day and as vinegar (Heb *xmj*) upon oil based soap (Heb *rtñ*) so is one who sings joyful songs on a broken heart. *Taking off ones coat in the cold increases the impact of the cold and cuts the comfort. Vinegar presumably neutralises soap and reduces its power to clean. Similarly cascades of joy will not impact the broken heart for good. Scripture tells us to sit where people sit and not to expect them to sit where we sit; to weep with those that weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. Romans 12.15 Ezekiel 3.15 There is no way one can wrench the broken from their tears. Even David played sympathetically -not using a trumpet but a mournful harp to revive the spirit of Saul.*

Winning back a personal foe 21-22

If your enemy (one who hates you) is suffering with an empty stomach cause him to be given food to eat and if he is absolutely thirsty cause him to drink water for you will take (Heb *htj* meaning "seize") live coals (Heb *ljg* not "dark black ones" Heb *mjp*) upon his head. *This idea comes from the Arab figure of "causing fire in the liver" which speaks of suffusing with shame. It is "love" that covers a multitude of sins and relationship is renewed not by "shaming" or "blaming" but by relieving and unburdening. And the LORD will repay your debt. You showed love and gave generously of bread and water like the Good Samaritan-the LORD will "make peace"(Hebrew *ml v*-meaning make SHALOM, which is exactly the reward one seeks) When Paul in Romans 12.20 uses the word "heap"(Greek *σῶρεω*) he is speaks of heaping one thing on another-in other words following the discipline of God represented in the loss of food and water supplies the grace of God is to be shown to the man by direct giving and grace upon grace by heaping upon the fortified man anthracite so he can immediately begin to cook the food he has been given.. Paul says, "Give him drink "quickly" and food "quickly" using the ζῶ termination of the Greek verbs and adds that as you "are inspired to do this on a continuing basis" you will show the genuineness of your care. anthracite Paul refers to is used for kindling fire has great value for baking bread and heating water which fulfils the "continued" interest in the need of this former enemy(Hebrew participle "taking" *htj*) beyond just donating immediate food. The victory Paul seeks to achieve is one of love and a changed heart. The means is love and "the coals of fire" have yet another symbolic meaning in Hebrew scripture. They tell of the altar on which atonement (Isaiah 6.6)was made which is the source of repair of relationships and the power that overcomes enmity.*

Hidden thoughts provoke anger 23

The cold north wind regularly brings violent heavy rain and a secretive tongue (*one that conceals*) **very angry faces.** *The "north" is thought of as the obscure or dark quarter of the heavens-so the "obscure" tongue may temporarily conceal but it reliably angers. The scripture here is asking for "openness" which is our understanding of the word "truth" certainly in the NT (Greek ἀληθεια—"not hidden)*

Six shots against "contention" -Solomon's strongest message to women
24

It is better to abide by the pinnacle of a roof top than with a woman of contentions sharing a house *This proverb is repeated six times in Proverbs (19.13, 21.9, 21,19, 25.24, 27.15,27.16)The thought of being behind the safety wall on the roof suggests it is safer there than in the house itself though it may not be comfortable the hot rage of the woman is harder to bear than the mid-day sun and the night time cold less penetrating than her harsh words.*

Gospel refreshment 25

As cool quiet waters upon the wearied life so is good news from a far country. *In Israel the Jordan was fed by the chill waters of Mount Hermon and its quiet flowing waters would be refreshing to one who was weary from toil or travel. The Hermon source might be far away but its waters were ever so welcome. So the message of encouragement from a distance is uplifting. The gospel itself has fulfilled this promise in many lands.*

Maintaining the right 26

A righteous man who wavers before or inclines towards the wicked is like a miry spring or a putrid well *It is so easy to give in and to fold before wrong in the ascendant-but that would be to murky the source of justice and despoil the purity of what is right-it would be to deny to the travellers along life's road the refreshment they need from righteousness displayed and available era upon era.*

Danger of digging into the mind or means of others 27

To eat lots of honey is not good and the searching or investigation (*Hebrew rbj "to dig into "*) **of their wealth or mind or precious things or the glory of their glory (is not good)** *It is good to taste the honey of bees but dangerous to go into their hive to displease them. So it is good to taste what the rich will donate but not to be over inquisitive.*

Discipline 28

The man who has no restraint or dominion over his own spirit is like a city broken down with no walls left. *The human life requires discipline to protect it from excesses and dangers. Without such ability to shut out evil influence the human life is like a city open to all who lay siege to it.*

PROVERBS 26

Fools-inert impious people possessed of grandiose ideas and bound by bad habits 1-5

(1)Doom and cursing come their way 1-2

As snow in summer and down pours of rain in harvest so weight of honour is not becoming in a great fool. *The unseasonable nature of the inclement weather leads one to remark that while folly persists great honour should not be accorded to a fool. Snow and rain "wash out" harvesting and folly puts paid to successful enterprise. Like a sparrow that flits to and fro and a swallow that flies around so a curse will not come gratuitously.*(*Hebrew mj meaning "gifted" or "gratuitous"*) *It is not "under grace" The word curse Hebrew lq has also the meaning "swift" and indeed evil strikes suddenly. Solomon says, however, it does not come by grace. There is always a reason behind what the LORD allows which is as understandable as the location where the sparrow or the swift may land. Evil seems unpredictable but these birds generally nest in familiar territory.*

(2) Discipline-words of little use 3

A whip for a horse and a bridle for a donkey and a rod for a fool's back. *The "fool" here is not just someone who despises religion-it speaks rather of an "inertness" associated with being bound by bad practice and given to gross habits and generally incapable of learning but by basic discipline*

(3) Directness in conversation 4-5

You will not answer a big fool according to his folly (Hebrew *tlw* meaning "that which is pre-eminent" as "horns in the case of the ram" as "his belly" or "His physical strength") **lest you also sink down or have a pitfall** (Hebrew *jw*) **like him Answer a big fool according to his big notions lest he appear spiritually wise in his own eyes.** *Scripture appears to give two pieces of contrary advice in this context but what is being said is that you might naturally answer (The Hebrew is a simple "future tense"[you will answer]ordinarily accepting his premises and thus fall into guiding him amiss and compounding his notions. The command comes next with the Hebrew imperative[You must answer]a fool rejecting his premises and in like manner stating true "pre-eminent" beliefs lest he believe his foolish beliefs or believe he is spiritually wise.*

(4) Diplomatic mission not for fools 6

He who sends oracular words(Hebrew *rbd* "vital words" or "decisive matters") **by the hand of a big fool cuts off or ends** (the value of) **his feet** (or sending agency) **and drinks pleurably or banquets** (Hebrew *htv*) **with violence.**

(5) Discursive teaching not for fools 7

As running legs dislocated must be feeble and grow weak so is didactic discourse in the mouth of a fool. *The lecture rooms of fools are not just empty -they do not exist. The trouble with dislocated legs is that the runner gets nowhere and so it is with conveying meaning and truth the fool gets nowhere in this area.*

(6) Doing honour to a fool is senseless 8

Like a man who presses a little stone (Hebrew *rrx*) **in a heap of stones is one who gives an honour to a fool.** *The translation of Coverdale links this with the custom of casting a stone on a heap where a criminal is buried. To plant a gem there is like giving honour to a fool. This is the simplest interpretation. Placing another stone on a heap that shows the way perhaps in the desert- called "Mercury's heap" is the custom preferred by the Vulgate translators. To wrap it in a bag or to add a valuable stone to the field stones in whatever context is an act of folly akin to giving honour to a fool. The stone will be stolen by the next observant passer by and to place it there in the first instance makes no contribution to guiding the traveller or bringing opprobrium upon the criminal so honour makes no useful contribution to the life of a fool. The NKJ translation "binding a stone in a sling" is an imported idea which neglects the "heap" that is at the centre of the historic image but it has this going for it- it is novel.*

(7) Dictums of wisdom mean nothing to fools 9

Like a thorn going up into the hand of a drunkard is a proverb or discourse in the mouth of fools *The drunkard hardly feels the thorn and the fool will not concern himself with the import or application of wise proverbs*

(8) Damnation: Christ the Judge 10

The great Initiator of all things or the great Piercer (as in "traumatiser" Isaiah 53.5) **is the payee of both the great fool and the transgressor** *Solomon speaks here of the LORD under the term "the One who begins" and the "one who ends" or "slays". In his hand lies the ultimate judgement of the impious and self-important fool bound to his sinful habits.*

(9) Doubling up on past folly 11

As the barking dog returns to its vomit so the big fool returns a second time to his folly *I once tried with all energy of mind to rescue a victim of foolish ways but to my sorrow found that dear soul contrived a second entrapment. Within the Christian dispensation through the gospel there is hope when a man lays down his own notions and humbly follows the way of Christ in the power and wisdom of a new life*

(10) Doing my best to please God 12

Have you seen the future of a man spiritually wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for the great fool than for him. *The fool may ultimately "bind himself fast" to the LORD in repentance and find hope but a man who thinks himself naturally alright spiritually (the "self-righteous") is a greater fool than our big fool of this section of the book of Proverbs. The final remark shows there is hope for the fool when he "wraps himself around the LORD by faith. (Hebrew חִנּוּק)*

The lazy man 13-16

(1) A man of Alibis 13

A leisurely languid man (Hebrew לֵצָחַי) says "There is a roaring lion (Hebrew לֵיָוֵן) in the way"; "a cruel lion amidst the streets *The laid back lifestyle of a man of languor suits staying put and not getting involved with the outside world. The result is that the wider world becomes for him a no-go area and he would be pleased if others believed it was a dangerous place. This is the fourth duplication of such reference. cf 15.19, 19.15, 22.13 and now 26.13*

(2) A man who sleeps a lot 14

As a door turns around or revolves on its hinges so the lazy man turns on his bed *Lazy people are too fond of their beds for their own good. A door spends years revolving on hinges in one location and lazybones is as likely to frequent his bed diurnally and spend a good part of his life turning in it.*

(3) A man of huge appetite 15

The lazy man buries his hand in a platter or large pan (Hebrew חָבַט) It gives him trouble to bring it back to his mouth *Utter turpitude means that even in eating the lazy man probably never uses table and plates-he eats directly out of the cooking pot and that is as much as he is willing to do.*

(4) An opinionated man 16

The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes than seven men that can return a discerning answer or revoke the edict of a king. *(Hebrew מִלְּפִי יִבְיָמ) It requires great skill to overturn royal decrees as Daniel discovered in Daniel 7.10. But the lazy man mistakenly believes himself to be wiser than the sages.*

The Meddler 17

He who in passing by has entered into (Hebrew רָבַח "transgressed into") a dispute which is not his is like man holding a dog by its ears *It is unnecessary and quite unwise to play with ravenous dogs and equally foolish to enter the disputes of other people. The world questioned the wisdom of the United States of America when with the help of Great Britain it entered Iraq. This action was an international act on a par with entering personal disputes. It could be argued that it contributed not a little to unsteady the whole world and enraging nations.*

The Dangerous Person 18-19

Like a mad man (Hebrew חֵלְחֵל תֵּם) firing firebrands, arrows and death is a man who deceives or trips up his neighbour and says, "I was only joking". *To deal in dangerous items such as knives or guns and use them in a hap hazard manner is not funny. Today mercifully we have become more conscious of matter of public safety. We have a continuing duty for the wellbeing of our neighbours.*

The Talebearer 20-22

Where there is no further wood a fire is quenched (Hebrew חָבַק) and without a talebearer strife will be stilled (Hebrew קָטַו "waves becoming still") *It is babbling or tale-bearing that fuels strife.*

As coal (Hebrew *mjp*) to burning coals (Hebrew *ljg*) and wood to fire so is a man of contention to kindling or burning strife. A fiery contention may be susceptible of containment but to introduce further dispute will cause it to burn with fury. Words of a talebearer are like "men of bread" The idea here is like our "gingerbread men" or other dainty figurines of the confectioner and these go down to the depths of the stomach. Not only do they "go down well" as we say but they are not soon forgotten and children remind their mama and nana again and again about them. Such are the words of a talebearer-sweet and very hard to forget.

Hate bearing speech 23-28

Fervent lips with a bad heart are like dross or inferior silver overlaid on wood brass or iron. There seems to be an outward beauty or ornament but the vessel is of a base sort. So the heart cannot be made beautiful by feigned warm affection of lip. **He who hates will dissemble with his lips or feign himself a stranger with his lips and deep within himself he lays a foundation of deceit** There is wicked work brewing in many a heart where hatred rules. People treasure up schemes of evil against those they hate bitterly. Solomon was aware like Jeremiah of the "deceitfulness of the heart"(Jeremiah 17.9) **When his voice is gracious do not believe him for there are seven abhorrent things in his heart.** Grace does not arise out of a heart of hatred but one where love dwells. There is no credibility among men of hateful heart. **His hatred is covered by bustle and shouting his wickedness will be revealed in the congregation.** It is not possible to disguise hatred amongst God's people. The Word of God reveals the sin of man. The fellowship of saints reveals the way the heart is. The Song of Praise or its absence reveals the heart.

PROVERBS 27

Yesterday is gone Tomorrow is not mine 1

Do not have had celebration or boast yourself on account of the day "Tomorrow" for you will not know what a day will birth. Paul is a splendid example of discipline of heart and mind. He said, "I will glory in tribulations, in the LORD,.... in my apostleship, in infirmities, in the cross Romans 5.3, 1Cor 1.31, 2 Cor 10.17,..... 2Cor 11.18, 2 Cor 12.9, Gal 6.14

Don't blow your own trumpet 2

Let a stranger (Hebrew *rz* "a foreign person") celebrate or praise you and not your own mouth (Hebrew *yp* meaning among other things "blowing"); one unknown or an alien and not your own lips (that you should "lick up" and enjoy your own praise)

What is heavier than stone or sand ? 3

Stone is heavy and sand is weighty to lift but the anger or displeasure (Hebrew *m[k* meaning "provocation") of a fool (Hebrew *lwa* "one of pre-eminence [self-importance]" or "belly" or in a religious sense like *lywa* "worshipper of Merodach" hence "errorist") is heavier than both.

Something worse than anger 4

Hot wrath is daring or cruel (Hebrew *rzka* meaning "routs the enemy) and anger (Hebrew *pa* "sudden rage") is a flood (Hebrew *pfv* meaning "an inundation" or "overflowing river"-carrying all before it) but who will stand or minister before the face of jealousy rivalry or ardent zeal (Hebrew *hanq* meaning deep rage at another for their prosperity or actions or what they are and represent)

Love must act-God so loved.....that he gave John 3.16 5

Open rebuke is better than hidden love Out of affection one may stand back from advising in the negative or correcting one who is admired but that is to fail a friend. To hide ones genuine care under whatever guise-perhaps non-interference-is a mistake. "Secret love" remains desire unspoken and in a sense it is self-destructive for *bha* or *αγαπη* is self-giving and rejoices in truth and not hiddenness

Judas' Kisses-cf Matthew 26.49 6

Faithful (Hebrew *myman* Niphal participle meaning "props made sure"[by severe kindness]) are the wounds (Hebrew [*xp* like [*xb* "to cut off finished woven work from the loom" so such wounds make us

whole) of a friend but the adjustments or kisses of an enemy multiply themselves or are many. The contrast is between a few hurts that bring completeness to life as opposed to a mass of unreal emblems of intimacy which deceive and bring grief to life-like Judas' kisses.

A hungry man eats anything 7

A satisfied soul throws out (Hebrew *šwb*) the honeycomb (Hebrew *ṭṭn* "sweet honey droppings") to be trampled on but to a famished soul every bitter thing is sweet (Hebrew *qtm* "for sucking" like *xm* "tasty")

Wandering feet 8

Like a bird that wanders from the nest it built or from the reeds so is a man who keeps wandering from where he was raised or where he has become established. *There lies behind this proverb the thought of commitment. The bird can relinquish commitment readily but the man should take care of his own. In 1 Timothy 5.8 we are told that to spurn care of one's own is to be "worse than an infidel"*

Pleasure that titivates the emotions and pleasure that refreshes the soul 9

Perfume and incense will bring joy to the heart and counsels of the soul are sweet to his/her friend *In Job 42.10 we read of Job praying for his friend or eating companion. A friend may bring beautiful perfume but better still are counsels of the soul which are so good that they are to be relished and tasted frequently.*

What can a brother do? 10

Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend and do not go to the house of your brother in the day of burden ruin or calamity for better is one that dwells nearby than a brother of distance. *The supports of society come through family friends. The Scots have a saying, "Auld freends are guid freends" "A brother is born for adversity" Prov 17.17 Hebrew *hrx*-that is for times when distress as "a family bereavement" or adversity such as the "threat of an enemy" occurs. So for instant relief in calamity look to people living near your homestead; for help with long term opposition or family loss lean upon your family for support.)*

A wise son shields from reproach 11

My son be spiritually wise and gladden my heart and I will reply to the word of him who reproaches me *A son who lives right brings public credit to his parents and spares them unwelcome criticism*

Seeing the signs of the times 12

A prudent or shrewd man (Hebrew *mr* [meaning "one who" like Joseph "heaps up grain"-a man of perception and foresight) sees future bad things and conceals himself; the simple pass on and are fined or lose resources and money. *Some walk into the eye of the storm unwittingly whilst the wise lies hidden or is safeguarded from its fury.*

Discouraging licentiousness 13

Take the garment of one who goes surety for a stranger (or worshipper of strange gods) for his pledge on behalf of an unknown woman *This advice is given as a caution to those who would or could encourage prostitution*

There is a time to visit 14

He who blesses his friend with a loud voice in the darkness of early morning will have it reckoned to him for a curse. *However well intentioned a visitor at the crack of dawn may be he will lower his esteem by an inopportune visit. In my experience a well intentioned pastor fell into no end of unsuspected troubles on account of a family visit paid at the wrong time. My wife and I experienced an unwarranted family brow-beating through visiting a relative in hospital at an awkward moment though we had done so with staff approval on a day off, at our earliest opportunity and on account of the*

imminent perceived danger that the patient would not live. This proverb is so true. Whatever other factors are favourable if the time is wrong no other explanation of good intent will do.

Out of the storms of strife 15-16

Dripping (Hebrew pld "the drip drip drip")of **driving rain** (Hebrew drf "lashing ")in a day when **the door is shut**(i.e. when nobody ventures out) and a women of (continual) **strife** are ever so **depressing** (Hithpipel of hjv meaning ""get you down" "cause downcast eyes" bring the soul low") **Whoever restrains her restrains the wind or whoever is destined for her is destined for a storm or revival or emotions [of all kinds] and his right hand will proclaim fruitfulness** *She is a vigorous woman whose strife resurfaces as the wind revives and yet the man destined for her though he will live a storm tossed life it will be one marked with fruitfulness and progeny. The redeeming feature of this woman is that she will bear progeny to her longsuffering spouse. Professor Morris of Lampeter in the SPCK commentary declares this verse "corrupt" in the Hebrew and points to the LXX which reads, "the north wind is sharp but it is named "propitious" επιδεξιος which is the nearest we get to "lucky" and it appears in what might be called here the Greek alternative to scripture. I believe the Hebrew is far more satisfactory and tells us that from depressing situations by endurance and love even such an unpromising wife can become a blessing. This is the story of Jesus-"While we were yet sinners Christ died for us". There is ground for proclamation in reversing the strife of sin and proclaiming "oil" or "fruit". It is unlike Solomon the preacher to crescendo speaking about a "lucky wind". This section is of great significance since it brings to a conclusion all the references to a "woman of strife" in the context of the Spirit, preaching and fruitfulness. To strike out this significant section and pronounce it "corrupt" is contextually inept and breaks faith with the received text of scripture.*

Friendship leads to spiritual sharpness 17

As iron will sharpen iron so also a man will sharpen the face of his companion or friend *The principle of iron sharpening iron is seen at work in the cylinder lawnmower. A French firm produced a push mower called Ginge in the 1990's and possibly into the new millennium. My Ginge never needed sharpening since its spring loaded blades constantly sharpened one another. It worked on this principle As people enjoy companionship or "fellowship" effectiveness-in terms of fitness to serve Christ is notably increased along with zeal for the LORD. The prayer triplet principle took advantage of this fact and the success of the modern home bible study programme of many churches is founded on this truism*

The return of Christ 18

The one who watches the fig tree shall eat its fruit *The principle here is that the ripening fruit needs to be guarded from predators and whoever is successful to guard the tree will be rewarded by fruit.*
And he who keeps watch for his master shall be honoured. *This principle not only works in the rural setting of watching trees but operates spiritually in the church as we "who love His appearing" watch for Him and do His will. It was our LORD JESUS CHRIST who associated the fig tree with his coming and in Luke 21.29 instructed us to watch the "fig tree"(cf also Matt 21 19-21 and Matt 24.32 & Lk13.6-7). What honour indeed to be found watching when He comes, to be working in the field.*

Each heart is special and known to God 19

According to waters (i.e. reflection) **the faces belong to the faces so the heart of a man belongs to that man** *The element of water acts as a mirror and each man can tell his own face if several kneel to look on the surface of a pool. The water like the camera does not lie. So expressions of the heart such as contrition, love, sorrow, bitterness, hardness, "double nature", understanding, will and purpose or affections quite unique to the man reveal his character .The heart is a mirror of the man. This proverb is not repeating the truth of Jeremiah 17.9 but rather telling us that a man's heart reveals the stresses and failures of that man*

Hell will never be full 20

Hell and destruction will never be full so the eyes of mankind will not be satisfied. *Behind this proverb lies the wonder of grace. God prepared this place for the devil and his angels and yet millions of mankind must be there besides. Hell wants more souls than earth will supply because Grace has set*

up a rescue shop within a yard of hell as General Booth said. Man is perpetually looking for something -Jesus directed us to the "birds" and "flowers" and away from food and clothes towards things spiritual. Only in this way-by the "look of faith" will any man find satisfaction and the power that springs the hell bound trap.

Trial and character 21

A smelting pot for silver and a furnace for gold and a man belongs to the face of his brilliance or celebrated praise. *The process of creating fine silver and high carat gold we call "refining". In the old times the refiner looked in the pot to see his face and when it was absolutely plain the job was complete. When precious metals are produced they are highly regarded and a man refined by trial will equally be given large praise. These two principles- trial and Christ likeness- in their application and by their results define character. In 1 Peter 1.7 we are taught that "the trial of our faith being much more precious than gold" will be found unto "praise" at the LORD'S appearing.*

Incorrigible folly 22

If you pound (Hebrew *vtk*) the fool in a mortar in the middle of husbards of bruised corn his foolishness will not depart from him. *The work of the mortar and pestle in reducing the grains of corn to meal succeeds with regularity but the size and strength of folly is beyond man to pound or train out of him. He is incorrigible.*

Pastoral Care 23-27

Know and be aware of the faces of your flocks of sheep and goats (Hebrew *naX*) and set your heart to the flocks or ones left behind or wanting (Hebrew *rd*[]) *Two things are required here. First how are the sheep -are they fed and looking fit. Second, is there any missing from the flock? It was David who said, "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be wanting"* **For riches are not for ever (Hebrew *ml*#[i.e. "a lifetime" or the "era" of a dynasty) nor a diadem from generation to generation. When the grass is bare or the hay gathered and the green herbage is seen and the full grown herbs of the hills full of seed are gathered the lambs will provide your clothing and the goats the buying price of a field-you shall have sufficient goats milk for your food (it is to be remembered that this milk produces good cheese) for the food provisions of your house and for the lives of your maidservants.** *This quite beautiful passage shows that animal husbandry will reward the farmer at a time when the ground has yielded its corn, the fields are bare and the new grass just showing. Solomon was wise to realise that basic revenues in cash could be taken away and trappings of royalty cease but a few healthy animals could prove vital to sustained family life in times of hardship. No economy can afford to neglect what Dickens called "portable property" in the form of livestock. Spiritually too pastors need to be well aware of those they serve-as to whether they are in Christ and as to whether some are missing or have backslidden from the faith.*

PROVERBS 28

The State of the Nation- 28 proverbs on the ups and down of nations

Spiritual union is strength 1

The guilty turbulent or wicked flees for safety when no one is in pursuit but the righteous ones are confident as a lion. *The guilty is seen as acting singularly on his own whereas the righteous in union present as a lion. It is fellowship with the LORD and one another that induces this security.*

"Representative" government 2

Because of the defection (Hebrew [*vp* "broken covenant"]) of the land its nobility (Hebrew *rc*) is numerous. *Even today if one takes trouble to scan the socio-political scene where there are numerous sycophantic nobles close to the head of state enjoying privilege and sinecure settings we have to ask is corruption widespread? Is this people living humbly and righteous? Is each his brother's keeper? Feudal England was no different from modern oligarchies which lack accountability to God and society* **But by a representative man (Hebrew *mda*-as the first Adam who represented divine rule)-one who understands and knows (God) instituted rectitude (Hebrew *nk*) will be prolonged.** *The principle set forth is that of covenant faithfulness -which is not bolstered by numbers but insured by righteous rule.*

*Today within democracy the leader is answerable to the people as their representative and true monarchy which arose within theocracy is anachronistic. The British system endeavours to pay respect to divine rule over kings whilst making parliament sovereign. For this curious re-construction which through the monarch as head of the English Church has paid some respect to the above claims we are indebted to Henry VIII and the Reformation for the first part and Oliver Cromwell on the other part. The Cromwellian contribution with the ascendancy of parliament has taken us centuries to get beyond the medieval mushrooming of nobility whilst the puritan application of the principle of the Supremacy of the monarch under God within the New Covenant served to maintain the throne. There is no reason to suppose that the alternative re-construction of a **Republic** with democratic government instituted to honour the LORD could not equally lend continuity to the rectitude of state institutions provided in the first instance that the Covenant principles of the LORD were represented in the constitution and reflected in the second instance in the warp and woof of legislation. The dictum "The government of the people by the people for the people" secures against an estate of nobles and appears by default to provide for wise and godly leadership. "Under the LORD" needs to be added-and it would seem but a dream till Shiloh comes. Whilst "under god" has resonance the notion of "godhead" is now largely divorced from the New Covenant with the result that original Puritan or biblical thinking has succumbed to humanistic thinking. The best hope is that insofar as nations honour the LORD they will be privileged to serve Him in continuance. Besides the principle of "**Knowing** the will of God"(in matters moral & spiritual) there has to be in leadership the principle of "**Understanding** by counsel"(in matters historical & practical) Understanding is represented by "Privy Council" and "Cabinet" though scripture is explicit that "Understanding" begins with the LORD so the regard for the LORD and the prayerfulness of members of all state institutions is of great significance.*

Wars of the poor yield no bread 3

A poor (Hebrew *vr* which is cognate to *vnr* of Russia) **or needy hero or soldier** (Hebrew *rbg*) **who strives with the feeble and powerless** (Hebrew *ld*) is "sweeping rain" and "no bread". The idea of a revolutionary who has physical and numerical power without wisdom results in a broken people. Whether Solomon who traded east is speaking of the powerful fierce but poor leaders that peopled the north in his day is uncertain. Certainly the twentieth century fulfilled this proverb literally. A current glowing example of such conduct has been the administration of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

Guard the flock (of God) (Pastors feed the Church Kings guard the state) 4

Those who forsake the Torah or commandments praise the wicked, but those who keep (Hebrew *rmv* "guard the flock" hence protecting the good) **the Torah will strive in battle** (Hebrew *hrj* meaning "provoked and stirred against) **with them** This must speak of the continued international role of Israel acting against the terrorists who gain praise from those who do not respect the commandments of the LORD

Seeking the LORD 5

Fleshly men of evil will not understand justice but those that seek (Hebrew *vqb*) **the LORD will understand fully.** This is not a glib phrase-there is nothing gratuitous here-such people are prayerful people who seek the face of God-how He directs and whether He rejoices or is silent or will chastise.

Solomon did not lose the common touch 6

Better is the poor walking in his integrity or completeness than one perverse (Hebrew *vq[* "twisting") **in his paths though he is wealthy.**

Companions of scripture 7

Who watches (Hebrew *rxn* "as with a torch" keeping the city or defending the vineyard) **the Torah is a son of understanding but a companion of prodigals or voluptuous profligates shames his father.** The difference between sons is marked: sometimes it is simply personality; sometimes it is acceptance of faith or its rejection; sometimes it is character. An interesting case is the story of the prodigal and his brother in Luke 15. Our company should be with scripture and digesting its truth whoever else we eat

with. I have often walked in from my "commentary box" and found my wife and her companion quite animated-her companion -the scriptures!

Fiscal policy right out of the bible 8

He who increases his wealth by high interest (Hebrew *Jvn*) and by gradually raising it (Hebrew *tybrt*) gathers it together for him who will be gracious to the feeble and weak. *I have lived to see something one could hardly have dreamed of. The banks which made huge profits from high rates have been compelled by the need of the nation and the world to lower these rates on Friday 7th November 2008 in the United Kingdom. Now those who stand in need will gain help as this procedure takes hold here and it would seem in the Euro area. This is perceived fiscal wisdom in a time of credit crisis.*

Two way communication broken 9

One who in a final act removes his ear from listening to the law -even his prayer will be an abomination. *To remove the ear is to cease to worship and so to try to talk to the LORD after cutting off what He needs to say to one is great folly and results in prayer unanswered*

Live straight-live perfect 10

He who causes the righteous to wander in an evil way will fall into his deadly snare or sepulchre but the perfect will inherit goodness *Here is a striking difference between the vulnerable "straight living ones" and the ""complete in mind and heart". Abram is such a person. He is commanded by the LORD in Genesis "Walk before me and be thou perfect"(Genesis 17.1) In NT terms such persons are "crucified with Christ" whereas in OT terms they are "consumed" or like whole burnt offerings (Hebrew *mnt*)*

Rich man poor man 11

The rich man is wise in his own eyes but the poor man of understanding will dig out all about him. *Theodosius has "the poor follows his every footprint" -the LXX "the poor knows him intimately". I recall times during my schooldays when I was able to help my father who served some rich and gracious gentry at that time in Ireland. I was but a poor boy but I got to know the quantity of liquor that the household consumed. I became aware of the problems habits and joys of that household. I was aware that the lady of the house was a minister's daughter and very kind to me too-but when it pleased the LORD to save my soul I understood that a better wisdom was haemorrhaging from the family my father served. It subsequently gave me much joy that a grandson of this same home contacted me for help on a legal nicety and I discovered that he was serving Jesus like myself.*

Days of Disguise 12

In the exulting of the righteous (over the wicked) there is great warmth and beauty and at the rise of terrorists men disguise themselves (Hebrew *vpj*) *One of the historic campaigns of terror was that mounted by Graham of Claverhouse and the Redcoats in Scotland during the killing times. The Covenanters lurked in valleys and their stalwart preacher Alexander Peden became famous for his disguise. He wore a false face throughout those days.*

Confess by singing 13

He who covers his transgressions will not succeed or flourish (Hebrew *jlx* meaning "finish well") whoever confesses them openly (Hebrew *hdj* meaning to sing or confess) and forsakes them will receive mercy *It is most notable that David in the 51st psalm not only openly confessed his sin but also set his confession to rhythm and rime and allowed the world to know he had failed. That act has helped millions of believers ever since. The Confessions of St Augustine in a lesser way not only gave closure and provided a thaumaturgical effect-they have helped other pilgrims.*

Hard hearts susceptible to evil 14

Happy is the man who is always timid or cautious for himself or reverent before Jehovah but he who allows his heart to become stubborn(Hebrew *hvj*) will fall into evil *The cautious person has a basis for happiness; he will not easily be duped into danger or a trap. The person who hardens his heart opens his life to great dangers.*

Leaders born in the jungle 15

Like a roaring lion and a hungry running bear is a terrorist leader over a poor people. When terror sits in the saddle of power lives are cut short and many good persons disappear without a reason

Long life and leadership 16

A leader who goes before a people without understanding is a great oppressor (Hebrew qv[meaning "one who takes things away by force) but he who hates "tearing things to pieces" or "unjust gain" will lengthen days or prolong the lives of subjects. When life expectation increases and men live to see good days it entails not only the providence of God or genetics but also good leadership of the nation

Do not support violence 17

A violent man through the blood of a life will flee into a pit. He will not hold up his hands in it. (Hebrew Jmt) The significance is that unlike Moses in Exodus17.12 he will not ask for support and certainly not get it. Scripture says he is not to be the subject of prayer. He is under judgement. Those who adhere to God's word are not to bring such person succour

Salvation and the walk of faith 18

Whoever walks perfectly (cf the context in Genesis17.1) will be saved but he who is twisted and fickle or deceptive in his ways will fall in a single event. Salvation which involves deliverance welfare support and victory is as perfect as the walk of man and far greater. It has in view temporal and eternal help.

Work and eat 19

He who works his fertile land will be sufficed with bread. He who follows vanity (Hebrew qyr) pouring out of himself will have his fill of poverty.

Avoid the Quick Buck 20

A man of faithfulness will be big in blessings received but he who presses or is urgent to be wealthy will not go free of punishment or obligation or he is not finished there.

Shun prejudice; don't turn traitor for a morsel 21

To discriminate in favour of faces is not good because for a morsel of bread a warrior will break a covenant

The terror of quick riches 22

A man with an evil eye hastens anxiously (Hebrew lhb "to flee in trepidation") after riches and is not aware that poverty will come upon him. This "rush of terror" to find riches can mean robbery or some scheme laden with risk or breaching law. Such schemes are contrived by forgers and bank robbers who must carry out their plans in terror of their lives.

Rebuke not flattery 23

He who rebukes chastens or convicts a man will find favour later from him that is smooth and flatters with the tongue The flatterer will at a later stage acknowledge that directness was the right approach not approval of failure or such consolation as says "Don't worry about it"

A Man of Corruption (Genesis 6.12) 24

He who claims for himself from Father or Mother or despoils them and says, "It is not a breach of covenant" is companion to a man of destruction.

Prosperity promised 25

He who is big or boastful of heart will stir up or excite strife but he who trusts in the LORD will be prospered over and over again. (Hebrew Pual of nvd)

The path of wisdom is smooth 26

He who trusts in his own heart is a big fool but whoever walks in spiritual wisdom will be preserved in life or have a smooth way or escape danger.

Benevolence 27

He who gives to the poor will not want; but he who covers his eyes will have many curses or detestations *To give is to find God's loving support. To withhold is to ultimately incur blame from the mouths that were unfed. Deut 15.7 "You shall open your hand to your poor brother"*

Righteous rule revives after terror 28

At the upsurge of the terrorist men (*Hebrew mda "men who represent government"*) **will hide but when they perish the righteous will increase.** *Just as grass and trees grow more lushly after a forest fire so integrity abounds with the fall of terror.*

PROVERBS 29

Going heedless of warning brings sorrow 1

A man of "reprovals" (several) who stiffens his neck will suddenly (*Hebrew [tp "the opening of the eyes"]*) **be broken and there will be no healing** *It does not pay to run in the face of divine chastisement. That way is ruin without remedy.*

Righteous rule brings joy 2

When the righteous are in majority or power (*Hebrew tibr*) **the people will rejoice and on account of the rule of the terrorist or fraudulent the people will be afflicted.**

Spiritual wisdom yields joy 3

The man who loves spiritual wisdom will bring his father joy; but a companion of harlots will destroy wealth. *This was the elder brother's criticism of the prodigal son for which there is circumstantial evidence-he accused his brother of bringing sorrow to his father. The repentance and home coming of the prodigal also brought joy because God gave the prodigal "wisdom".*

The "Ministry" of Justice 4

A king by justice will act so his land endures or for its destiny or in ministry to the land but he who receives bribes pulls it down (*Hebrew srh*)

No victory by flattery 5

A heroic or prevailing man (*Hebrew rbg*) **who performs flattery upon his neighbour spreads a net where his steps fall** *Flattery induces pride and pride comes before a fall. Flattery also promotes conduct which might have been better challenged. There is no heroism or strength of character in taking on the character of a flatterer.*

Joy and Song under the covenant 6

By breaking the covenant an evil man is snared but the righteous will sing and be radiant with joy

The righteous show empathy 7

The righteous knows the contention of the weak but the wicked does not understand by personal experience *This proverb is borne out by the sizeable contributions of righteous and Christian persons and nations to need worldwide and also by the long history of philanthropy*

Wise action undermines gradual ruin 8

Fleshly men of scoffing satire or enigmatic statements lay snares for a city but wise persons will act to turn away anger. *Those who decry faith and speak critical can erode the welfare of a city or*

state but concerted action of the wise can avert danger. We have a similar saying "All that is required for evil to succeed is for good men to do nothing"

The fool disturbs the wise 9

If a wise man defends his own cause against a man who is a fool (*Hebrew "rolling in fat or riches or eminence") whether he rages or laughs there is no rest.*

Prayer out manoeuvres hatred 10

Men of bloods (*or murderous intent*) **hate the perfect and just men will seek the face of God for his soul or simply strive for his soul**

The stroke of a strong swimmer leads to a happy aftermath 11

A big fool brings out all his thinking or the dispositions of his spirit but the wise man will soothe his spirit with praise afterwards or "surmount the waves (of anger) afterward" *A fool give vent to anger and overreacts. A wise man will stay calm and swim through turbulence as a swimmer stroking steadily when encountering rough water and simply keep calm-so that "afterward" he is happy not depressed or moody like the fool whose anger leaves a trail of problems and harrowing emotions*

Loss of confidence 12

If a ruler takes steps to lend his ear or commits to listen to act-words of covenant breaking (*Hebrew rqv*), **all his ministers** (*Hebrew trv*) **become perfidious**

The LORD gave eyes to good and bad 13

The poor and the injurious man who often oppressed (*Hebrew Jkt*) **meet each other** (*Hebrew vgp*); **The LORD is the cause of light of the eyes of both.** *The tragic scene where the oppressor meets his poor victim is one where the former sees the results of his conduct and the latter sets eyes on him who does injury to his health and estate. The light given to both can enable persistence and repentance and even care for one another.*

Justice established government 14

The king who judges the feeble poor (*literally those "pushed around") with truth -his throne will be established for the duration (of his life)* *The record of justice is best read in the treatment of the poor*

No latch key stuff will work 15

The rod and sturdy chastisement give spiritual wisdom but a youth sent on his own way (*Hebrew jlv meaning "sent out") is a shame of his mother*

Growth of terror curtailed 16

In the increase of the wicked or turbulent covenant breaking grows but the righteous will see their fall. *This is a promise which is prophetic. Solomon and indeed we ourselves must believe in the triumph of the LORD*

Leisure awaits good parents 17

Gently correct your son and he will set out to give you rest and he will give you delicate relaxing pleasures (*Hebrew nd[*) **for your life or soul.** *This is a proverb that as parents my wife and I can testify is true to the letter. Our sons have given us both delicate pleasures and relaxation. They enabled a journey to Canada and in their homes have shown us hospitality; played the loveliest music and chosen beautiful videos to soothe us with nostalgia. Best of all they preach and teach Christ. We did under God seek to guide their lives by right correction but it was divine grace in salvation that made them the men they are today. To the LORD be the glory.*

How to counter loose living-God's word 18

By the absence of divine vision or oracle (*Hebrew mxxj -also of "prophecy" and "covenant") the people will be let loose or "naked" but he is blessed or happy who watches the law* (*keeping its 10 statutes as a shepherd watches sheep*) *This famous proverb is actually addressed to "loose living" and its counterpart-living by the word of God and His commandments.*

In one ear out the other 19

A servant will not be corrected or disciplined by technical words or words (alone) for he will understand but not answer or respond *This is what we call "in one ear out the other" bidding and it is not effective to change conduct. There need to be other restraints besides. Today the threat of dismissal if standards do not improve or even loss of pay are used where absenteeism or other breaches occur*

Hasty speech is disastrous 20

Can you envision a man hasty in his words; there is more hope for a big fool than for him. *Such a fool may give up his extravagant notions and be freed of his bonds to sin and may well twist himself around the LORD in prayer and that engenders hope-but a man of hasty speech is hard to rescue*

Kindness brings people close 21

He who treats his servant delicately (Hebrew *qpp* "to delight in") will have him as his young master or "posterity" (Hebrew *nm*) afterwards.

The twin dangers of anger 22

A man of anger stirs up contention and a husband of hot wrath stirs great covenant breaking. *The first man I shall describe as a soldier type who is always warring and the second as a marriage partner who breaks his relationship with his wife or even with every wife he takes. Contention and divorce are frequently the result of anger in grown men.*

The value of humility over pride 23

Pride or haughtiness or arrogance of man will bring him low but lowliness of spirit will support him as Aaron and Hur supported Moses who admitted his weakness and obviously called for help (Hebrew *Jmt* cf Exodus 17.12)

Eternity-do not prejudice your destiny with Christ! 24

Whoever shares with a thief hates his soul, he hears the "curse" or "covenant confirmed by oath" or "binding oath" (in judgement) but reveals nothing. *A man who has cast in his whole future or inheritance with the thief will under oath prove like a stone-he will confess to nothing. Such a man hearing the 8th command of the covenant will not be convicted enough to confess; such a man knowing the curse of breaking the law will not come clean. He has sealed his doom and cast in his lot for the whole future. The lesson is, "do not prejudice your eternal future by any relationship."*

Faith secures against fear 25

Fear or terror or concern of man gives a snare but he that trusts in the LORD will be raised or elevated or secure. *I heard Morris Cerullo say this very evening (Sunday 9 Nov 2008) that in speaking to Mary the Angel dealt with concern or fear. It was so with the disciples when the LORD met with them on the sea. There are hundreds of "fear not's" in the bible. This proverb needs to ring out in sermons and in our prayers. It is timelessly true.*

Justification is of God-salvation belongs to the LORD 26

Many seek the face of the ruler but the justification of man comes from the LORD (Hebrew *vja fpvm* means "justification of man" that is, his being declared free from guilt or charge. No ruler can render that assurance) *This again is a classic statement and must be rated as one of the noblest of the proverbs if among the least well-known-probably because it is poorly rendered into English.*

Light has no fellowship with darkness 27

A man who turns away (Hebrew *l#* -a Hebrew word I remember from one of my first ever lessons in that wonderful language-I remember I was sitting within the Wesleyan seminary in Belfast and our lecturer said, "This is the most terrible word in the Hebrew language" It is the word "Iniquity" and then he uttered it in Hebrew.) or is depraved or iniquitous is abhorrent to the righteous and a man who is straight in the way is abhorrent to the wicked or those who deal in terror *As it reads in 2 Cor*

6.14 , "What communion has light with darkness?" The beginnings of eternal separation are in the here and now

PROVERBS 30

SECTION 7 CHAPTER 30

A triplet of men led by Agur 1-5

The word of Agur son of Jakeh -the "load"(the message) "carried" (Hebrew *avmh*) **This man (or) warrior made his declaration to Ithiel for Ithiel and Ucal.** The message in the form of a declaration -hence the NIV "prophecy" was made to "Ithiel" with the intent that it be shared with "Ucal" also. 'Ithiel' means simply "God with" so this man was one who sought and practised the presence of God. Both knew 'Ucal' whose name means "swallowed"(by fire or sword or wrath). The message has special bearing therefore on those who are seeking to walk with the LORD and for those who have come through great trouble and serious incident or who are "angry with God". 'Agur' himself bore the name "collector" and although he confesses his poor past record of spirituality and devotion in v.3 it would appear that is the prelude to a change which he advertises in his "declaration". In "collecting" the hand is opened and closed with the thumb tightening to firm up the four fingers. I have taken his seven "Three or four things" as "fistfuls" of "collected" points which make up a valuable series of teachings on the godly state. In each case the "fourth" lesson in the series is highly significant and helps impress and illuminate the main topic or lesson. Between the larger topics of Agur we are given a number of his important dictums of teaching on vital subjects.

Agur confesses his past failures-his testimony 2

Surely I am "consumed"(as with fire or anger) **beyond any man.** He feels he is "exterminated"-consumed with personal anger Ezek 21.36, Isaiah 30.27 Psalm 79.5 or as in Psalm 90.4 by divine wrath-both can be true. He (was) like Paul who says "I am the chief of sinners. In fact when Paul speaks of "breathing out slaughter" his "fierceness" is exactly paralleled with the "brutishness" of Agur. **I had not the mediated understanding of Adam.** Adam had the blessing of the LORD walking with him evening by evening in the garden giving him understanding. Agur did not walk with God. **I did not persist in learning spiritual wisdom and I was not experiencing first hand the view or knowledge of God Himself and holy people separated to God.** Hebrew *myvdq*

(1)The four theological questions 4

Earth water wind and fire are the four primordial physical powers acknowledged by the ancients. Here Agur asks questions about three of them. But he begins with a question which our LORD Jesus Christ put to Nicodemus in John 3.13

(1)Who has ascended up to heaven and will come down again? The perception is uncanny. It is as if this old question is picked up by Jesus as being absolutely the first and vital query to put to Nicodemus. It entails the power to transit from the realm of deity to the realm of humanity. It brings us back to the beginning when God could and did descend to be with Adam and returned to heaven on a daily basis

(2)Who has gathered the wind or Spirit in his fists? Hebrew *ngp* points to One so powerful that all the storms that afflict the earth he can hold back and rein in like a wild horse-grasping the ethereal and controlling the immense strength of natural elements with consummate ease. The text of Mark 4.39 supplies an immediate answer from the ministry of Christ. The deeper implication of "adding the Spirit" to his possession and gift takes us to John 14.26 where this level of the query is answered by Jesus.

(3)Who has bound together the waters in a heavy night time robe? In the darkness before dawn in Galilee Jesus walked the waters and bade them "Be still". The force of this question is "Who can bundle up the waters" for safety? cf 1Sam 25.29 The decree of God shows that this control lies with the LORD - Genesis 9.15

(4)Who has established all the ends of the earth? Who raised or restored to their height the extremes of the earth? The question may well relate to the former as the renewal of the earth after the flood relates to the withdrawal of the waters from off the surface of the earth. The earth ends at its poles and the wonder of the polar ice caps may well have been known 3000 years ago-for the story of their formation may have been folk memory at the time of Agur. The divided earth with its distant lands was also known to ancients of scripture (Genesis 10.25) This fourth question unmasks a man who believes in the deluge and understands judgment and reveals a person deeply interested in "big questions and out of this fourth and most important question relating to the LORD of history and his providences comes the query:-

What is His name and what is His Son's name...for you will know (or) is it so that you know?

Either translation is accurate. Certainly revelation would make this clear in future time. But Agur is

probing if Ithiel or Ucal have rumbled the Triune being and the concept of the "Son" which David also in Psalm 2.12 plainly grasped.

Agur's dictum on the purity of scripture 5-6

Agur knew the commandments of Moses (30.9) and perhaps even the psalms of David (cf Psalm 12.6) He was a student of the scriptures. He said **Every word of God is pure** (Hebrew *prx* of melted, refined and tested metal-and in particular of "gold"). So God's words were "golden". **He is a shield to those who flee for refuge in Him.** It is hard to avoid the view that Agur was familiar with the psalms of David. His statement here is virtually a "take" from Psalm 2.12 and 5.12 and is of a piece with Psalm 11.1. **Do not add to his words in the form of legal and action commands (Hebrew *rbd*) lest He chastens you and you prove yourself a "liar" or "deceiver"** (Hebrew *bzk* meaning "a stream that dries up and disappoints"). Several sects have taken in hand to re-write the bible and insert their own commands. One example is the so called "new world translation" of the Jehovah Witness organisation. The five man team was represented in court by Franz (the only recognised "scholar" who in answer to the question, "Can you translate that into Hebrew -the fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis?" answered "No". He dropped out of the University of Cincinnati in his sophomore year. He had not been studying Theology. He later admitted being unable to translate even "one" bible verse. (Nov 24 1954) We can include this bogus translation among those classifying as "deceptive."

Agur's prayer for spiritual food -to enable him avoid false life-styles 7-10

Two things I pray from You, do not withhold them from me before I die. Remove far from me, noisy calamity or vanity or raging mischievous design and "false oracle". Give me neither poverty (Hebrew *vif* meaning "to be in want") **nor "a build up of riches" or (to be "happy rich" Hebrew *rv*)]** **Break for me the (fresh) bread of my portion or pluck the (fresh) fruit of my food** (This is co-ordinate with the fourth petition of our LORD'S pattern prayer.)

(1) **Lest I become satisfied or full and make a habit of disavowal deceit Hebrew Piel of *vjk* and say, "who is the LORD?" or**

(2) **Lest I become dispossessed of goods and steal covertly or**

(3) **Lest I use the name of my God irreverently. Do not use the tongue boldly or slander a servant to his master**

(4) **Lest he curse you and you become guilty and get punished.** Hebrew *mva* As he ages Agur desire the LORD to provide for him and he seeks "quietness" and also has learned like James the careful use of the tongue so that he does not occasion his relationship with others to be affected by mistreating people of lower estate.

(2) Agur's declaration on The Four Personality Types 11-14

(1) **The Melancholic. (Moody Melancholius) There is a generation or "contemporary" that continually curses his father and does not continually bless his mother** The Hebrew verbs *llq* and *Jrb* are in the Piel repetitive. Here is the richest personality and at the same time the weakest. **Plagued with mood swings, critical negative revengeful lacking in confidence. Analytic perfectionist gifted self-disciplined and industrious "One sour at home and successful abroad"**

(2) **The Phlegmatic (Pussyfoot Phlegmaticus) There is a generation that is pure and bright in its own eyes yet has not washed itself from its own excrement.** This type puts off till to-morrow what could be done today and is marked by **a lazy streak** and can prove a bit stubborn. On the positive side this is calm cool diplomatic and efficient type practical and agreeable enough "One that sits and sulks a bit but achieves a lot"

(3) **The Sanguine (Sparky Sanguinius) There is a generation, "How aloft their eyes!" and their eyelids elevate themselves.** This type may lack discipline, be somewhat excitable, tend to exaggerate or manipulate and prove hot tempered. On the positive side enthusiastic compassionate stimulating and ambitious features will be recognisable. "One who storms at those he cherishes"

(4) **The Choleric (Rocky Cholericus) There is a generation whose teeth are swords and whose biting or molar teeth are knives for murder to devour the earth's poor and the abysmally poor from among mankind.** Cold self sufficient domineering and sarcastic types with a cruel turn of phrase

unsympathetic opinionated yet active energetic with strong leadership gifts and goal orientated. cf Amos 8.4 "One who gets what others lose"

(2) Agur's declaration on the value of a soul 15-16

Life can "leech away". Man is born to death as the sparks fly upward. In his unique way Agur teaches the value of life by pointing to scenes where it is sadly wanting

The leech has two daughters "Give" "Give" *These daughters have the same cry and deserve the same name. They are insatiable blood suckers and destructive of life. **There are three things that are never satisfied and four that do not say, "Enough!"***

(1) Sheol *Here is the vacant chair and the weeping widow and her sad children. Death has entered. Solomon in Proverbs 27.20 stresses this unquenchable thirst of Sheol. Agur gives fair warning that death is 100% certain*

(2) A shut womb or girl restrained from bearing *Here is the "Hannah" figure -the dearest barren Rachel-the woman feverishly calling on God to reverse her barrenness. The "closed womb" is indicative of a prejudiced future. Who will inherit? What of old age? Let's pray to God!*

(3) Land not satisfied with rainwater *The third picture is of a mid-east drought-famine has taken hold-the land languishes in the vein of Habakkuk, "'Although the fig tree shall not blossom neither shall fruit be on the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail; and the fields yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls...yet I will rejoice in the LORD .What joy when the rainbow sits again amid the clouds and the land receives the "former and latter rains!"*

(4) And fire that (never) says "Easy" *Fire swirls through village after village when invaders strike and fire starts surreptitiously and burns the crop and trees and homestead. Afterward all is still. Hope lies in ashes.*

Life is so precious. It is vital to live godly and pray for the salvation of souls.

It is fundamental that we grasp the threat to "life" is sin unto death, only the "New Birth" build the church as natural birth builds the family , no provision of the word of God results in fruitlessness and death; and passion and anger that ruin so many lives.

Agur's dictum on "honouring parents" 17

The eye that jests or "speaks scurrilously" (by silent gesture) concerning father and despises obedience to mother -the ravens of the valley will dig it out and the sons of the eagle will devour it.

Agur is warning that gross carelessness of parents will ironically result in nemesis. Carrion birds will deal with the earthly remains and the brood of vultures employing habits well and truly learned from their respected parents will despatch the earthly body of the one who despises his parents.

(4) Agur's declaration on persistence -the path and the loving faithfulness of God 18-19

There are three things which are too wonderful or miraculous for me and four which I have not grasped by personal experience *Hebrew [dy*

(1) The way of the eagle in the heavens

(2) The way of the snake upon the sharp rock or rocky edge.

(3) The way of the ship in the heart of the sea and

(4) And the way of the young man winning a maiden. *In explaining these "wonders" one has to say that Agur is quite clearly by his own confession no bird-handler or snake charmer and it does not appear that he is a skilled sailor for that matter nor would it appear that he has been married if "winning a bride" is something of a miracle in his eyes. Had he found the formidable task of investing every effort in the woman of his dreams came to grief once and again in face of a more ardent suitor and given up the chase? Second, one should be advised that the Hebrew word Jrd which is used in each of these phrases carries vital significance. It means "to tread along" or to pound the path" from which I think we can say that in each of these wonders there is some considerable **persistence** required. The eagle has to learn from that first fall from the nest to use of the air currents and preening of the all important feathers that unique skill of mounting into the heavens like no other bird can. The snake must persist inch by inch in moving on dry rock and climbing the steeps over sharp rocks. The ship that sails by the stars must tack slowly along its path and the suitor must court his maiden with utmost devotion. Thus what at first seems a miracle reduces to a labour of love and a skill that is developed by assiduous*

practise. It would be so easy for the eagle to give up-especially when it comes to that time when feathers fall off and it has to live through "bird-depression" as we might say. The story is told in Psalm 103.5. The snake too could slither around in the grass but it develops its muscles by exploits not by rest and ease. The ship will convey no cargo nor get the prize of golden merchandise unless it climbs through the heaving waves of the sea. The youth who proves unfaithful to his dates will lose the hand of the maiden. He too must sacrifice everything to win his fair lady. Each of these four puts in huge effort to achieve their goal and where Christ and his church symbolised by the "fourth" picture are concerned the cross no less is the standard for the saint as it was the demand the Saviour made upon Himself. Personal experience is the touchstone in every case-and without this "all too wonderful" experience of marriage Agur will have to be content to dream. Without being prepared to sacrifice everything like the eagle dropping out of the nest and falling on its devoted parent or the snake hazarding the precipice for its hissing brood or the sailors amid tumultuous seas for desire of that abroad or the suitor hazarding all for a bride there is no understanding of "the way". "The way" demands the faith which trusts the eagle mother; the faith which for the snake is the tree in the crag and for the ship is the starry heaven and for the beloved is the love that places itself on a cross-to show how firmly we are held in His affection..

Agur's dictum on denial of sin 20

Similar is the manner of the woman of adulteries. *Such a woman hardened to her life style pursues her trade day and night. Hers is a steely persistence in moral evil. **She eats and wipes her mouth** which being interpreted means she experiences oral sex and cleans up afterward as a routine. **And says "I have attempted Hebrew I [p meaning "I made no preparation" yet she set herself in the way or prepared her house no deep moral and spiritual evil (Hebrew מלא) yet adultery is visited with the penalty of death because it is so gross in God's eyes.***

Agur's declaration on matters that disturb the body politic 21-23

Under three things the land is provoked to anger or irritated & disturbed Hebrew זגר And under four it has not the prevailing power to bear up.

(1)(When it) is under a servant because he will be reigning into the future *No nation can continue to resist irritation and anger when in place of a weak monarch one of his entourage effectively becomes monarch. When the rule of a nation is subverted a corrective must be sought*

(2)And (under) a fool when he will go on sating himself with food *When the Fool looms large in the land one must expect his downfall. The Hebrews associated the word "fool" with godlessness and self-regard. It may be that Agur was very familiar with the Nabal of 1 Samuel 25 and is making him an object lesson to others lest they adopt a life style of excess.*

(3)And (living under) a hate producing woman when she has married herself to a husband *The Niphal of the Hebrew verb "to marry" means that she has by forwardness gained a husband but her union with him and all her ways are marked by hate-filled living. Hatred then spreads like a canker and polarises the community. Ultimately as in the case of Jezebel such a person must be brought to book*

(4)And when the maidservant dispossesses her mistress *The process of displacement of a wife by a concubine is mirrored in the Genesis 16 default of Sarah who proposed that her husband Abram partner Hagar -her handmaid-for the purpose of bearing a son. Agur -who knew the psalms and the Law of Moses, would have known this story well. In the event the love of Abram for Sarah was not prejudiced or lessened although it was compromised. Besides it was not so much Hagar as Ishmael who caused the family rift though Hagar may have featured in the background and so scripture says, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son"*

Agur's declaration on Spiritual beginnings 24-28

This of all the eight lessons of Agur is perhaps the most stunningly interesting and also has brought him to prominence with his biblical audiences over the ages. A children's' evangelist from Southport by the name of Arthur Greenwood Merseyside produced a fifteen page tract printed by the Eastern Printing Press Liverpool on these verses 25-28 and entitled it "Clever stick, Helter Skelter, High Flyer and Interloper. I have been so taken by Arthur's imaginative names for the little creatures that I am using them in the present section of this commentary on "Proverbs" which may at some stage warrant separate issue.

There are four things which are little things of the earth. *The Hebrew םףק suggests both "little" and "cut off". In each case they live separated lives. So should the people of God. They are wise beyond the wise. Their wisdom enters into the "When" "Where?" "Why?" and "How?" of sustaining life*

(1)Clever stick. The ants are a people not splendid & majestic or firmly protected or heroic. *Our writer is not interested that greenflies are their cows or any other aspects of their incredible industry than their preparation to sustain their lives. Hebrew ז[**Yet they create and prepare their food in the summer** we learn from them to seize the hour-they are tiny opportunists-every one of them. In matters of the gospel they teach us "Now is the day of salvation. Today while you hear His voice- harden not your hearts".*

(2) Helter -Skelter. The conies are not a people with strong bodies and they make their homes in sharp rock fissures *Hebrew [I S These little rock badgers whose habit I have watched with fascination along the margins of Galilee at Horvat Minnim near Tabgha. They are so readily frightened and I remember them scurrying off "helter skelter" into the crevices of old basalt ruins leaving just one brave look-out to advice when it was safe to adventure out again. They teach us the "Where" of safety. Like them we are not able to sustain our lives from the predators of sin and death unless we hide in the Rock that is Christ. Augustus Toplady wrote that lovely hymn "Rock of Ages" on a playing card as he took refuge in a rock cleft during a storm in the West Country. Its lines direct us as to where we are forever safe.*

*Rock of Ages cleft for me, Let me hide myself in thee
Let the water and the blood from Thy riven side which flowed
Be of sin the double cure; cleanse me from its guilt and power.*

(3)High-Flier. The locusts have no king but they all (he) going forth goes forth in divisions *The text is grammatically perverse. There "they are" -the "he" that goes in bands. They display absolute unity and each is a model of pin-point location. They are seen as many and yet the verb to "go forth" is put twice in the singular as if they go as one. They are utterly united yet in divisions. They follow some unseen order. The Hebrew literally reads "He going in bands goes in divisions or bands" It is like that with Christians. The "Why?" of unity and the "Why?" of ordered witness and warfare and the "Why?" of sustained Christian life and growth are to be found in the guidance of Christ through the Holy Spirit.*

(4)Interloper. The (poisonous) lizard again and again lays hold or takes hold with its hands and it is in the palaces of kings. *Such as we who have sinned and proved deadly to our king should not be admitted to his courts but precisely on account of the death of Christ which was and is the way in our first relationship with Him and in all our dealings with him-like the lizard we must constantly cling to what He has done and by faith we will arrive in the beautiful place where Christ is. An "Interloper" as to feelings and our state but kings sons as to our standing by faith in Him who died for us.*

Agur's declaration on conquest and or victory 29-31

There are three things which make their way well from slow pace *The idea is that they can accelerate speedily and four things which go-on adding or pursue from doing well. They can continue to increase and hold speed*

(1)A lion which is mighty among wild beasts and it will not turn from the face of any. *Here is both the courage and the immense pace of the lion. It first stalks and then it increases momentum and goes flat out in pursuit of prey. It conquers as it puts everything into it and is assured of victory. It does not stall for lack of courage.*

(2) A warhorse of loins (or) a wrestler (or) a greyhound. *The Hebrew ףףז (greyhound) is linked to םףמ (loins) and western commentators favour the warhorse and the wrestler is also suggested for his leg and stomach muscles-but I will stay with the rabbinic scholars because the greyhound has the acceleration that neither of the others has and its pursuit of the rabbit is sustained until it obtains its quarry. The greyhound has massively developed thigh muscles which give it acceleration and pace and ensure it outruns its lesser prey.*

(3) A He goat. *The "He goat" is fierce as I have occasion to remember. Once in Co Tyrone one such visited with us in the afternoon and was determined to take up residence on the lawn. I was equally determined the animal was to find other distant pastures. Armed with a stick I set about teasing it away but to the "tee hees" of my wife and the consternation of our boys the animal reared up on its hind legs*

and challenged me head on. I made a calculated withdrawal and was gratified when a farming friend Irwin Craig arrived to save the day. He grappled the animal to the ground tied its legs and took it off like the scapegoat to a place from which it never again returned. I had no doubt that if I had run -and I could have managed a good pace for some time- this lusty fellow who was used to the terrain would have cornered me ere long and the battle would have been over. The He-goat is a natural conqueror **(4) A King with troops.** The Hebrew translated "troops" is no such thing. The word is מַמְלָא which Jewish interpreters claim is formed from the words "Not" and "arise" and therefore means "None will rise" against him may also be rendered "the strong or heroic one rising". The Arabic word form to which Gesenius traced the word means "the people". So "the king with His people" goes on majestic. The king in this case who has the love and support and following of his people would go on well. I return to my own understanding of the Hebrew מַמְלָא "Mighty God(or) Hero"" rises" and add to that "with his people" and we have something vastly speedier and a booty greater than any lion or greyhound ever gained. Here is the Risen returning LORD speeding from the throne of heaven with his people to take his servants home. This is the final majestic sight that Agur lays before us. For his part Agur may have had such thoughts of David who was so beloved and whose psalms he quotes and who was both fleet of foot and full of courage and lived victorious amid turbulence. The final example of this principle must however be our LORD Jesus Christ in his glorious victory.

Agur's dictum on pride 32-33

If you have been a "fool"-a Nabal-in having lifted yourself up proudly in the past or if you have meditated a plot or muttered dissention put your hand on your mouth. *The enemies of David were dealt with by Solomon as recorded in 1 Kings 2. The context suggests Agur is a man deeply aware that "the day of reckoning" had arrived for the King's enemies. The king in the midst of his people had not only come to be crowned and honoured by his people-he had come to right wrongs and to do judgement. It will be even so when our LORD Christ returns again. For as the pressing or churning or separating of cream produces butter and the pressing and wringing of the nose blood so the pressing or squeezing or churning of anger produces strife contention or legal action.* Agur's last word is to disabuse his hearers and readers of any notion of engaging the king's anger and risking contention in the shape of the threat to one's life or the threat of legal condemnation. The final danger which runs in parallel to this dictum is the "day of judgement" where all who have provoked the LORD by revolt and rebellion and failure to repent will appear on that great day. Agur advises the fool to turn from his foolishness and scripture advises the sinner to turn from his unrighteous ways and seek the LORD while he may be found "for God has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by "this Man"(Jesus) whom he has ordained, whereof He has given assurance unto all men in that He has raised Him from the dead."(Acts 17.31)

Content review

Thus commencing with his "testimony" and confession of personal failure Agur moves to settle his declaration on four great theological questions. He proceeds to declare the purity of scripture and shows us the beginning of his prayer life as he seeks a daily portion from the LORD to sustain him. His declaration takes its natural course through the basic personality types of the human race from which he shows them all to be flawed. Nevertheless he does not lose sight of the value of a soul and of the first base of training in godliness-the home-where a person learns to honour his parents. The teacher goes on to state that "the way" is one of Love. He moves to show we just can't deny sin and its total corruption for we see it in the body politic again and again as in our own lives. So the means and method of salvation are affirmed and the way of victory set out for our instruction as we tread the way of the pilgrim till the King comes who is LORD and judge of all. A finer piece of work on the spiritual life of similar compass and comprehensiveness would be hard to find in all literature. Well might Solomon include it as his work comes to a majestic finish.

PROVERBS 31

SECTION 8 PROVERBS 31

It has to be noted that chapters 30& 31:1-10are missing from the LXX

Bathsheba's song 1

The words of a king dedicated to God. (*Hebrew la mml*) **The "uplifting" which his mother taught him** (*Hebrew Piel of rSy "to instruct and warn"[singing] over and over again.*) *There is no need to posit a king by the name of LEMUEL or suggest a mother by the name of MASSA or Edom.*

First, the point being made is that the king is "dedicated" by his mother and his God is "EL" the strong one of Israel.

Second, the poetry is after the Hebrew alphabetical material. It would seem fitting that the wife of David tried her hand to some song writing after the style of her husband creating what Toy calls "The ABC of the perfect wife".

Third, the repetitive teaching method and the poetry virtually require song and the word MESSA in the text is not vocalised MESA' but MASSA' giving the lie to "a proper name" interpretation (i.e. the name of the king's mother) and warranting rather a participial noun "lifting up"(i.e. the song of Bathsheba whom I understand to be the "mother" in question)

It is most appropriate that Solomon's mother should be remembered for her care and love in dedicating him to God and for her kind and serious training of the heir apparent. It is like Solomon to say frankly, "my mother made every early endeavour to set me on the right way". That she should consider advising her son with deep earnestness in the light of her own sad experience in the loss of Uriah and early experience of David is absolutely understandable. The words that follow would be sung by and possibly spoken or sung along with his mother so Solomon could retail them in detail in later life and hence they appear as his capstone of the book-this is the explanation of the first lines of the chapter.

A good Queen's great questions 2

What of my son and what of the son (or what a son) of my womb? *Every woman asks the question, "What will become of my son. My own mother asked it in poetry, showing her affection for the little child the LORD gave her. She wrote: "And when thou art to manhood grown and all your manly ways are known then will I wistful try to trace the boy you once were in your face". The Queen was deeply proud of her son and self effacing too. That deep within her the LORD formed a child was so wonderful-one to replace that little one who died-such complex circumstances too-what of the princely child?*

Neither warrior nor playboy 3

Do not give your "hurling (of yourself)" or your "dancing "(a possible allusion to the harvest festivities where women are chosen) or "palpitation" for wives (plural) Solomon is being advised not to "hurl himself at " or "palpitate" for many wives nor your ways of life to (women)destroying kings or simply to destroying kings *Bathsheba does not wish Solomon to become a warrior always given to battling other kings neither a man enticed with many women to his ruin.*

Much wine renders kings careless of right 4-5

It does not belong to kings, O dedicated one (to God) It is not for kings to drink or banquet on wine nor is intoxication for princes lest they drink and forget the statutes and change the defence of all the sons of affliction

The dedicated mouth of Solomon 6 -9

Give strong intoxicating drink (Hebrew rkV) to the one perishing in death (as an anodyne) and wine to those who are bitter or sorrowful in soul (those who mourn or have undergone trial) Let him drink and forget his need and not remember his travail or wretchedness any more. The opening of your mouth (should be) for the silent widows and for the sons whose parents are passing away. The opening of your mouth is justice for the righteous and for the defence of the afflicted and the abysmally poor. *Bathsheba gave Solomon 5 objectives-she deterred him from opening his mouth to consume large quantities of wine and appealed that he should instead open it to protect and alleviate the widow, the orphan, the righteous, the afflicted and the poor.*

Eulogy of the Virtuous woman 10-31



ENDURANCE Who will find a woman of valour (Hebrew l yj -a word used for the "space surrounding the temple"-its "fortification" also of "strength of integrity" and of "endurance") her bridal price is a great distance or far beyond rubies.

B

CONFIDENCE The heart (*judgement, design, will, reasoning, fears, sorrow, conscience & guilt*) of her husband confides in her. And he will not lack spoil or booty or hunted prey (*to eat*) or gain What wealth she can bring to the union by her industry she will delight to supply

G

CHERISHING She shows him good and not evil all the days of his life. The Hebrew word *lmg* means to "benefit in such a way as to cherish. The radical meaning is "warm" or "cherish" The love she affords lasts all of a lifetime and is used also of ripening fruit so that the relationship becomes more lovely and mature.

D

APPLICATION She keeps moving around or keeps seeking sheared off fleece and flax (*stalk*) and sets her hands to work with ardour or delight (Hebrew *xpj*) This woman is out visiting the farms where she can purchase raw materials for garments. Then she sets to with joyful inclination to card wool and spin linen and produce materials.

W

SHOPPING She is like the merchant ships -bringing her food from afar. In those days the ships of Tarshish were plying the Mediterranean and bringing foodstuffs from Spain and the West and vice-versa. Solomon would one day have a navy that outdistanced and outsourced these ships

Z

EARLY RISER She rises in the house of the night and gives fresh plucked food (Hebrew *prf*) to her household (*the word here is Chaldee perhaps reflecting the fact that Bathsheba being Hittite was familiar with that linguistic medium*) and a portion (Hebrew *qj*) for her maidservants The quality of the woman is seen in this that she rose before her maids and set them their tasks and made sure they were properly nourished.

M

ENTREPRENEUR She considers or proposes a field of her own and takes possession of it. This does not necessitate that she buys it. It may be a family field which she sets to work. What she gets is a meadow or field ploughed and sown. From the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard. From the "gain" of working that field-possibly undertaking the harvesting of what is already planted she has enough to purchase vines and plant a vineyard to multiply her profits.

Heth

PHYSICAL FITNESS She girds her loins with strength This restraint enables the lady, who may be continuing to bear children simultaneously, to lift heavy weights to her head and she continues to strengthen her forearms (Hebrew Piel of *xma*)She has been used to the spindle but now is working in the field

T

DISCRETION She tastes and sees (Hebrew *m[f]*) that her produce is good Psalm 34.9 uses this phrase which is applied here to "wine-tasting" to the LORD. She is very discerning-not just of her product but the danger of imbibing too-so she "tastes"-nothing more. Her lamp will not be extinguished in the night. She works longer hours still than when she was engaged in spinning weaving and needlework v15. It has to be remembered that women lived and slept in different quarters from men in the Hebrew home.

Y

SKILLED She spreads her hands to the distaff and reaches to take hold of the whirling spindle There is a deftness and swift ambidextrous alacrity which we associate with pianoforte in this lady. She has through long practice developed enviable skills

K

COMPASSION She opens the hollow of her hand to the afflicted The valiant woman has a very compassionate heart and shows care by benevolence and great generosity toward those going through

sorrow or pain. She gives them what they need and she sends out her hands to the abysmally poor She not only gives them what is needed but she opens her arms and heart and doors to these poor ones.

L

PROVIDENT & LOOKS AHEAD She will not fear what snow would be like for her household for all those of her house are clothed in double and changes of garment. (Hebrew מַיְמִינָה means that they have "change of clothing" and they have layered clothes)

M

HOLINESS She makes coverlets or bedspreads and /or neck collars for herself. Her clothing is fine linen and purple This lady is suited to be the wife of a poor man or a king. Here she is discovered producing items which were made to adorn the temple. The temple of her life is adorned with white linen and purple robes. She makes her own accessories. She is deft with needle and embroidery. She is coloured beautiful in religious colours for holiness is seen in her life as in the house of God.

N

HELD MEET Her husband will become known in the gates because he keeps the day of rest with the elders of the land. The skill and industry of this lady are such that she will be chosen by a man of calibre and spirituality. Even if her husband were not in his own right outstanding he would obtain reputation from such a wife so that people would say, "He is the husband of that woman of valour"

S

VISION She makes loose wide undergarments and she will sell them and she provides belts for the Canaanite merchants or Phoenician traders. Some of her produce finds local market and she gets into belts or broad girdles with pockets which are more exclusive and sought both by traders and the rich. She has cornered two significant markets-that for underclothing and that for girdles which may include ladies girdles and men's belts complete with pockets

Ayin

REPUTABLE & PRAISEFUL Strength and reputation for splendour are connected to her garments The work she turns out lasts and those who buy it get good wear out of it. Her clothes are also well made and enjoy a reputation for taste and artistic loveliness. She will smile with approval for the future or enjoy laughter or play music and dance in her latter day This lady has no need to fear the future for she is fully provided for and her family. Her later days will bring her much joy from the experiences of earlier hardship and developing links with the wider world. Her music will doubtless like that of David and Jeremiah (1Chron 13.8, 15.29 and Jer 31.4) include thanksgiving to the LORD for his providence during her life.

P

SPIRITUAL She opens her mouth in Spiritual wisdom and Torah of covenant love is on her tongue. With all her work this lady has retained her spirituality and she is down to earth (Hebrew מַקְיָה) and practical in her religion. Besides this she holds to the commandment as one who loves the word of the LORD and His covenant with His people

Tsaddi

VIGILANT & PRAYERFUL She continues to look out for the goings out and in of her family on the watchtower (Hebrew הַפֶּתַח "watches" and "expects" as a concerned mother and "keeps watch by prayer" Ezek3.17)) She not only observes her family but looks to God expecting help for her family from that source and she does not eat the bread of the idle ones. She will not spend time with the slothful for her scene is one of purpose and commitment to family.

Q

HAPPY & APPRECIATED Her sons rise up and continually bless her. This is the custom in Jewish households when the family worships and remembers God's provision. Also as her sons rise to distinction they commend their excellent mother. Her husband also constantly sings her praise.

R

Lots of daughters have done valiantly -you yourself "lead" them all or are "blossoming" or "ascending" higher than them all. The words of the husband commend this lady as the best example of virtue and valour ever. All past examples of character in the fairer sex fade before her. This might be

the tribute David gives to Bathsheba and it is very sure that every man possessed of a delightful and wise wife as intrepid and caring as this will count her unequalled.

Shin

SPIRITUAL WORSHIP AND CONTRITION Grace of life is deceiving *In the sense that you cannot exactly read a person from what they give and from apparent generosity or more especially from the favour others bestow on them by way of reputation and beauty is but a breathe-a vapour-or a comment of the mouth -a wife reverent of the LORD-she will have been praised over and over again. It is fear or awe of the Living LORD that is the basis of wisdom-in a life that departs from sin and evil.*

Tau

Give her of the fruit of her hands and let the things she has made over and over again be her praise in the gates where they are marketed *Give her the worth of her work for in the gates it receives unstinting praise constantly. The judges praise her there; the traders praise her there. She has the praise of her family and eventually she receives the praise of her city and nation. The gates of Jerusalem in this day were the gates of the first city of wisdom faith and prosperity in the whole world so this final encomium could hardly be surpassed.*

Epilogue

So the book of Spiritual Wisdom comes to a conclusion although its effect shall never end while the world stands. Solomon cast truths in memorable mould much in the style of Shakespeare and seeded the Hebrew language and subsequently the speech of Christian people with a currency of wisdom in sound bites. Please refer to Chapter 25 for further background.

*A ditty composed by the Author 11.11.2008
To accompany the Commentary on "Proverbs"
& declaring the intent of Solomon*

Solomon Ben David wrote them
In the hope that all would quote them
When tilling fields and guarding walls
At City gates and market stalls
To send them rolling off the tongue
As sweet as any song that's sung

Bob Coffey
Aramaic Bible Companion