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PROVERBS 9: 1 Wisdom has built her house. She has carved out her seven pillars.

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Wisdom builds her house, makes her provision for a great feast, calls her guests, and exhorts them to partake of her entertainment, Pro 9:1-6. Different admonitions relative to the acquisition of wisdom, Pro 9:7-12. The character and conduct of a bad woman, Pro 9:13-18.

The same Wisdom speaks here who spoke in the preceding chapter. There she represented herself as manifest in all the works of God in the natural world; all being constructed according to counsels proceeding from an infinite understanding. Here, she represents herself as the great potentate, who was to rule all that she had constructed, and having an immense family to provide for, had made an abundant provision, and calls all to partake of it. This, says Calmet, is the continuation of the parable begun in the preceding chapter, where wisdom is represented as a venerable lady, whose real beauties and solid promises are opposed to the false allurements of Pleasure, who was represented in the seventh chapter under the idea of a debauched and impudent woman. This one, to draw young people into her snares, describes the perfumes, the bed, and the festival which she has prepared. Wisdom acts in the same way: but, instead of the debauchery, the false pleasures, and the criminal connections which pleasure had promised, offers her guests a strong, well-built, magnificent palace, chaste and solid pleasures, salutary instructions, and a life crowned with blessedness. This is the sum and the substance of the parable; but as in the preceding part, so in this, men have produced strange creatures of their own brain by way of explanation. One specimen of this mode of interpretation may suffice.

The house built by wisdom is the holy humanity of Jesus Christ; the seven pillars are the seven sacraments, or the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, or the whole of the apostles, preachers, and ministers of the Church; the slain beasts are the sacrifice of Christ's body upon the cross; and the bread and mingled wine are the bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper! - Fathers and Doctors.

If we have recourse to any other particulars than those given above in the summary of the chapter, let us follow the first part of the parable, where wisdom is represented as laying the plan of the creation; and then perhaps we may say with safety, that wisdom, having produced the grand ichnograph or ground plot of the whole, with all the requisite elevations and specifications of materials, comes to show us, in this part, that the whole has been constructed on this plan; and specifies the end for which this august building has been raised.

Verse 1

Wisdom hath builded her house - The eternal counsel of God has framed the universe.

She hath hewn out her seven pillars - Every thing has been so constructed as to exhibit a scene of grandeur, stability, and durability.

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PROVERBS 9: 2 She has prepared her meat. She has mixed her wine. She has also set her table.

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Verse 2

She hath killed her beasts - God has made the most ample provision for the innumerable tribes of animal and intellectual beings, which people the whole vortex of created nature.

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PROVERBS 9: 3 She has sent out her maidens. She cries from the highest places of the city:

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Verse 3

She hath sent forth her maidens - The wisdom of God has made use of the most proper means to communicate Divine knowledge to the inhabitants of the earth; as a good and gracious Creator wills to teach them whence they came, how they are supported, whither they are going, and for what end they were formed. It is a custom to the present day, in Asiatic countries, to send their invitations to guests by a company of females, preceded by eunuchs: they go to the doors of the invited, and deliver their message.

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PROVERBS 9: 4 "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!" As for him who is void of understanding, she says to him,

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Verse 4

Whoso is simple - Let the young, heedless, and giddy attend to my teaching.

Him that wanteth understanding - Literally, he that wanteth a heart; who is without couraye, is feeble and fickle, and easily drawn aside from the holy commandment.

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PROVERBS 9: 5 "Come, eat some of my bread, Drink some of the wine which I have mixed!

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Verse 5

Come, eat of my bread - Not only receive my instructions, but act according to my directions.

Drink of the wine - I have mingled - Enter into my counsels; be not contented with superficial knowledge on any subject, where any thing deeper may be attained. Go by the streams to the fountain head. Look into the principles on which they were formed; investigate their nature, examine their properties, acquaint thyself with their relations, connections, influences, and various uses. See the skill power, and goodness of God in their creation. And when thou hast learned all within thy reach, know that thou knowest but little of the manifold wisdom of God. Let what thou hast learned humble thee, by showing thee how very little thou dost know. Thou hast drunk of the provided wine; but that wine was mingled with water, for God will hide pride from man. He dwells only on the surface of religious and philosophical learning, who does not perceive and feel that he is yet but a child in knowledge; that he see through a glass darkly; that he perceives men like trees walking; and that there are lengths, breadths, depths, and heights, in the works and ways of God, which it will require an eternity to fathom. Here below the pure wine is mingled with water: but this

is God's work. Yet there is enough; do not therefore be contented with a little. To this subject the words of the poet may be well applied: -

A little learning is a dangerous thing; Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:

For scanty draughts intoxicate the brain,

But drinking largely sobers us again.

Pope

Among the ancient Jews, Greek, and Romans, wine was rarely drank without being mingled with water; and among ancient writers we find several ordinances for this. Some direct three parts of water to one of wine; some five parts; and Pliny mentions some wines that required twenty waters: but the most common proportions appear to have been three parts of water to two of wine. But probably the  $\gamma\mu\sigma\alpha\chi$  yayin masach, mingled wine, was wine mingled, not with water, to make it weaker; but with spices and other ingredients to make it stronger. The ingredients were honey, myrrh, mandragora, opium, and such like, which gave it not only an intoxicating but stupifying quality also. Perhaps the mixed wine here may mean wine of the strongest and best quality, that which was good to cheer and refresh the heart of man.

If we consider the mixed wine as meaning this strong wine, then the import of the metaphor will be, a thorough investigation of the works of God will invigorate the soul, strengthen all the mental powers, enlarge their capacity, and enable the mind to take the most exalted views of the wonders of God's skill manifested in the operations of his hand.

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PROVERBS 9: 6 Leave your simple ways, and live. Walk in the way of understanding."

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Verse 6

Forsake the foolish - For the companion of fools must be a fool.

And live - Answer the end for which thou wert born.

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PROVERBS 9: 7 He who corrects a mocker invites insult. He who reproveth a wicked man invites abuse.

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Verse 7

He that reproveth a scorner -  $\gamma\lambda$  lets, the person who mocks at sacred things; the libertine, the infidel; who turns the most serious things into ridicule, and, by his wit, often succeeds in rendering the person who reproveth him ridiculous. Wisdom seems here to intimate that it is vain to attempt by reproof to amend such: and yet we must not suffer sin upon our neighbor; at all hazards, we must deliver our own soul. But no reproof should be given to any, but in the spirit of love and deep concern; and when they contradict and blaspheme, leave them to God.

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PROVERBS 9: 8 Don't reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you. Reprove a wise man, and he will love you.

PROVERBS 9: 9 Instruct a wise man, and he will be still wiser. Teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

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Verse 9

Give instruction to a wise man - Literally give to the wise, and he will be wise. Whatever you give to such, they reap profit from it. They are like the bee, they extract honey from every flower.

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PROVERBS 9: 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. The knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

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Verse 10

The fear of the Lord - See on Pro 1:7 (note). The knowledge of the holy; קדושים kedoshim, of the holy ones: Sanctorum, of the saints - Vulgate. bouh agiwn, the counsel of the holy persons.

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PROVERBS 9: 11 For by me your days will be multiplied. The years of your life will be increased.

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Verse 11

For by me thy days shall be multiplied - Vice shortens human life, by a necessity of consequence: and by the same, righteousness lengthens it. There is a long addition here in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate: "He who trusts in falsity feeds on the winds; and is like him who chases the fowls of heaven. He forsakes the way of his own vineyard, and errs from the paths of his own inheritance. He enters also into lonely and desert places, and into a land abandoned to thirst; and his hands collect that which yieldeth no fruit."

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PROVERBS 9: 12 If you are wise, you are wise for yourself. If you mock, you alone will bear it.

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Verse 12

If thou be wise - It is thy own interest to be religious. Though thy example may be very useful to thy neighbors and friends, yet the chief benefit is to thyself. But if thou scorn - refuse to receive - the doctrines of wisdom, and die in thy sins, thou alone shalt suffer the vengeance of an offended God.

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PROVERBS 9: 13 The foolish woman is loud, Undisciplined, and knows nothing.

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Verse 13

A foolish woman is clamorous - Vain, empty women, are those that make most noise. And she that is full of clamor, has generally little or no sense. We have had this character already, see Pro 7:11. The translation of the Septuagint is very remarkable: Γυν ἡ ἀφρων καὶ θρασειά, ἐνδεὴς ψωμοῦ γινεταί, "A lewd and foolish woman shall be in need of a morsel of bread."

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PROVERBS 9: 14 She sits at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city,

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Verse 14

For she sitteth at the door of her house - Her conduct here marks at once her folly, impudence, and poverty. See above on Pro 7:6 (note), etc., where the reader will find a similar character.

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PROVERBS 9: 15 To call to those who pass by, who go straight on their ways,

PROVERBS 9: 16 "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here." as for him who is void of understanding, she says to him,

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Verse 16

Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither - Folly or pleasure here personified, uses the very same expressions as employed by Wisdom, Pro 9:4. Wisdom says, "Let the simple turn in to me." No, says Folly, "Let the simple turn in to me." If he turn in to Wisdom, his folly shall be taken away and he shall become wise; if he turn in to Folly, his darkness will be thickened, and his folly will remain.

Wisdom sets up her school to instruct the ignorant:

Folly sets her school up next door, to defeat the designs of Wisdom.

Thus the saying of the satirist appears to be verified: - "Wherever God erects a house of prayer,

The devil surely builds a chapel there.

And it is found upon examination,

The latter has the larger congregation."

De Foe.

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PROVERBS 9: 17 "Stolen water is sweet. Food eaten in secret is pleasant."

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Verse 17

Stolen waters are sweet - I suppose this to be a proverbial mode of expression, importing that illicit pleasures are sweeter than those which are legal The meaning is easy to be discerned; and the conduct of multitudes shows that they are ruled by this adage. On it are built all the adulterous intercourses in the land.

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PROVERBS 9: 18 But he doesn't know that the departed spirits are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

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Verse 18

But he knoweth not that the dead are there - See on Pro 2:18 (note). He does not know that it was in this way the first apostates from God and truth walked. רפאים rephaim; gigantev, the Giants - Septuagint. The sons of men, the earth-born, to distinguish them from the sons of God, those who were born from above. See the notes on Gen 6:1, etc.

Her guests are in the depths of hell - Those who have been drawn out of the way of understanding by profligacy have in general lost their lives, if not their souls, by their folly. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic make a long addition to this verse: "But draw thou back, that thou mayest not die in this place; neither fix thy eyes upon her; so shalt thou pass by those strange waters. But abstain thou from strange waters, and drink not of another's fountain, that thou mayest live a long time, and that years may be added to thy life." Of this addition there is nothing in the Hebrew, the Chaldee, or the Vulgate, as now printed: but in the editio princeps are the following words: Qui enim applicabitur illi descendet ad inferos; nam qui abscesserit ab ea salvabitur. These words were in the copy from which my old MS. Bible has been made, as the following version proves: Who forsoth schal ben joyned to hir, schal falle doun on to hell: for whi he that goth awai fro hir, schal be saved. Three of my own MSS. have the same reading.