

PROVERBS 10: 1 The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son makes a glad father; but a foolish son brings grief to his mother.

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It is impossible to give summaries of such chapters as these, where almost every verse contains a separate subject. Our common version not being able to exhibit the contents as usual, simply says, "From this chapter to the five and twentieth are sundry observations upon moral virtues, and their opposite vices." In general the wise man states in this chapter the difference between the wise and the foolish, the righteous and the wicked, the diligent and the idle. He speaks also of love and hatred, of the good and the evil tongue, or of the slanderer and the peace-maker.

Verse 1

The proverbs of Solomon - Some ancient MSS. of the Vulgate have Proverbiorum liber secundus, "The second book of the Proverbs." The preceding nine chapters can only be considered as an introduction, if indeed they may be said to make even a part, of the proverbs of Solomon, which appear to commence only at the tenth chapter.

A wise son maketh a glad father - The parallels in this and several of the succeeding chapters are those which Bishop Lowth calls the antithetic; when two lines correspond with each other by an opposition of terms and sentiments; when the second is contrasted with the first; sometimes in expression, sometimes in sense only. Accordingly the degrees of antithesis are various; from an exact contraposition of word to word, through a whole sentence, down to a general disparity, with something of a contrariety in the two propositions, as: -

A wise son rejoiceth in his father.

But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.

Where every word has its opposite; for the terms father and mother are, as the logicians say, relatively opposite.

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PROVERBS 10: 2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivers from death.

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Verse 2

Treasures of wickedness - Property gained by wicked means.

Delivered from death - Treasures gained by robbery often bring their possessors to an untimely death; but those gained by righteous dealing bring with them no such consequences.

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PROVERBS 10: 3 The LORD will not allow the soul of the righteous to go hungry, but he thrusts away the desire of the wicked.

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Verse 3

But he casteth away the substance of the wicked - But instead of רשעים reshaim, the wicked, בוגדים bogedim, hypocrites, or perfidious persons, is the reading of twelve or fourteen of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., and some editions; but it is not acknowledged by any of the ancient versions.

The righteous have God for their feeder; and because of his infinite bounty, they can never famish for want of the bread of life. On the contrary, the wicked are often, in the course of his providence, deprived of the property of which they make a bad use.

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PROVERBS 10: 4 He becomes poor who works with a lazy hand, but the hand of the diligent brings wealth.

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Verse 4

He becometh poor - God has ordered, in the course of his providence, that he who will not work shall not eat. And he always blesses the work of the industrious man.

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PROVERBS 10: 5 He who gathers in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during the harvest is a son who causes shame.

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Verse 5

He that gathereth in summer - All the work of the field should be done in the season suitable to it. If summer and harvest be neglected, in vain does a man expect the fruits of autumn.

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PROVERBS 10: 6 Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked.

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Verse 6

Violence covereth the mouth of the wicked - As blessings shall be on the head of the just, so the violence of the wicked shall cover their face with shame and confusion. Their own violent dealings shall be visited upon them. The mouth forsooth of unpitious men wickidnesse covereth. - Old MS. Bible. "The forehead of the ungodly is past shame, and presumptuous." - Coverdale.

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PROVERBS 10: 7 The memory of the righteous is blessed, but the name of the wicked will rot.

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Verse 7

The memory of the just is blessed - Or, is a blessing.

But the name of the wicked shall rot - This is another antithesis; but there are only two antithetic terms, for memory and name are synonymous - Lowth. The very name of the wicked is as offensive as putrid carrion.

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PROVERBS 10: 8 The wise in heart accept commandments, but a chattering fool will fall.

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Verse 8

A prating fool shall fall - This clause is repeated in the tenth verse. The wise man will receive the commandment: but the shallow blabbing fool shall be cast down. See Pro 10:10.

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PROVERBS 10: 9 He who walks blamelessly walks surely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out.

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Verse 9

He that walketh uprightly - The upright man is always safe; he has not two characters to support; he goes straight forward, and is never afraid of detection, because he has never been influenced by hypocrisy or deceit.

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PROVERBS 10: 10 One winking with the eye causes sorrow, but a chattering fool will fall.

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Verse 10

He that winketh with the eye - Instead of the latter clause, on which see Pro 10:8, the Septuagint has, ὁ δε ελεγχων μετα παρρησιας ειρηνοποιει. "but he that reproveth with freedom, maketh peace." This is also the reading of the Syriac and Arabic. A faithful open reproof of sin is more likely to promote the peace of society than the passing it by slightly, or taking no notice of it; for if the wicked turn to God at the reproof, the law of peace will soon be established in his heart, and the law of kindness will flow from his tongue.

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PROVERBS 10: 11 The mouth of the righteous is a spring of life, but violence covers the mouth of the wicked.

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Verse 11

The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life - מקור חיים mekor chiyim, is the vein of lives; an allusion to the great aorta, which conveys the blood from the heart to every art of the body. The latter clause of this verse is the same with that of Pro 10:6.

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PROVERBS 10: 12 Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all wrongs.

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Verse 12

Hatred stirreth up strifes - It seeks for occasions to provoke enmity. It delights in broils. On the contrary, love conciliates; removes aggravations; puts the best construction on every thing; and pours water, not oil, upon the flame.

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PROVERBS 10: 13 Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has discernment, but a rod is for the back of him who is void of understanding.

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Verse 13

A rod is for the back of him - He that can learn, and will not learn, should be made to learn. The rod is a most powerful instrument of knowledge. Judiciously applied, there is a lesson of profound wisdom in every twig.

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PROVERBS 10: 14 Wise men lay up knowledge, but the mouth of the foolish is near ruin.

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Verse 14

Wise men lay up knowledge - They keep secret every thing that has a tendency to disturb domestic or public peace; but the foolish man blabs all out, and produces much mischief. Think much, speak little, and always think before you speak. This will promote your own peace and that of your neighbor.

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PROVERBS 10: 15 The rich man's wealth is his strong city. The destruction of the poor is their poverty.

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Verse 15

The rich man's wealth is his strong city - Behold a mystery in providence; there is not a rich man on earth but becomes such by means of the poor! Property comes from the labor of the poor, and the king himself is served of the field. How unjust, diabolically so, is it to despise or oppress those by whose labor all property is acquired!

The destruction of the poor is their poverty - A man in abject poverty never arises out of this pit. They have no nucleus about which property may aggregate. The poet spoke well: -

Haud facile emergunt, quorum virtutibus obstat

Res angusta domi. "They rarely emerge from poverty, whose exertions are cramped by want at home."

PROVERBS 10: 16 The labour of the righteous leads to life. The increase of the wicked leads to sin.

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Verse 16

The labor of the righteous - The good man labors that he may be able to support life; this is his first object: and then to have something to divide with the poor; this is his next object.

The fruit of the wicked to sin - This man lives to eat and drink, and his property he spends in riot and excess. God's blessings are cursed to him.

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PROVERBS 10: 17 He is in the way of life who heeds correction, but he who forsakes reproof leads others astray.

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Verse 17

He is in the way of life - The truly religious man accumulates knowledge that he may the better know how to live to God, and do most good among men.

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PROVERBS 10: 18 He who hides hatred has lying lips. He who utters a slander is a fool.

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Verse 18

He that hideth - This is a common case. How many, when full of resentment, and deadly hatred, meditating revenge and cruelty, and sometimes even murder, have pretended that they thought nothing of the injury they had sustained; had passed by the insult, etc.! Thus lying lips covered the malevolence of a wicked heart.

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PROVERBS 10: 19 In the multitude of words there is no lack of disobedience, but he who restrains his lips does wisely.

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Verse 19

In the multitude of words - It is impossible to speak much, and yet speak nothing but truth; and injure no man's character in the mean while.

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PROVERBS 10: 20 The tongue of the righteous is like choice silver. The heart of the wicked is of little worth.

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Verse 20

The heart of the wicked is little worth - כִּמְעוּט kimat, is like little or nothing; or is like dross, while the tongue of the just is like silver. A sinner's heart is worth nothing, and is good for nothing; and yet because it is his most hidden part, he vaunts of its honesty, goodness, etc.! Yes, yes; it is very honest and good, only the devil is in it! that is all.

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PROVERBS 10: 21 The lips of the righteous feed many, but the foolish die for lack of understanding.

PROVERBS 10: 22 The LORD's blessing brings wealth, and he adds no trouble to it.

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Verse 22

The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich - Whatever we receive in the way of providence, has God's blessing in it, and will do us good. Cares, troubles, and difficulties come with all property not acquired in this way; but God's blessing gives simple enjoyment, and levies no tax upon the comfort.

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PROVERBS 10: 23 It is a fool's pleasure to do wickedness, but wisdom is a man of understanding's pleasure.

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Verse 23

It is a sport to a fool to do mischief - What a millstone weight of iniquity hangs about the necks of most of the jesters. facetious and witty people! "How many lies do they tell in jest, to go to the devil in earnest!"

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PROVERBS 10: 24 What the wicked fear, will overtake them, but the desire of the righteous will be granted.

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Verse 24

The fear of the wicked - The wicked is full of fears and alarms; and all that he has dreaded and more than he has dreaded, shall come upon him. The righteous is always desiring more of the salvation of God, and God will exceed even his utmost desires.

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PROVERBS 10: 25 When the whirlwind passes, the wicked is no more; but the righteous stand firm forever.

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Verse 25

As the whirlwind passeth - As tornadoes that sweep every thing away before them; so shall the wrath of God sweep away the wicked; it shall leave him neither branch nor root. But the righteous, being built on the eternal foundation, **עוֹלָם יְסוּד** yesod olam, shall never be shaken.

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PROVERBS 10: 26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him.

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Verse 26

As vinegar to the teeth - The acid softening and dissolving the alkali of the bone, so as to impair their texture, and render them incapable of masticating; and as smoke affects the eyes, irritating their tender vessels, so as to give pain and prevent distinct vision; so the sluggard, the lounging, thriftless messenger, who never returns in time with the desired answer.

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PROVERBS 10: 27 The fear of the LORD prolongs days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

PROVERBS 10: 28 The prospect of the righteous is joy, but the hope of the wicked will perish.

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Verse 28

The expectation of the wicked shall perish - A wicked man is always imposing on himself by the hope of God's mercy and final happiness; and he continues hoping, till he dies without receiving that mercy which alone would entitle him to that glory.

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PROVERBS 10: 29 The way of the LORD is a stronghold to the upright, but it is a destruction to the workers of iniquity.

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Verse 29

The way of the Lord is strength - In the path of obedience the upright man ever finds his strength renewed; the more he labors the stronger he grows. The same sentiment as that in Isa 40:31.

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PROVERBS 10: 30 The righteous will never be removed, but the wicked will not dwell in the land.

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Verse 30

The righteous shall never be removed - Because he is built on the eternal foundation. See on Pro 10:25 (note).

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PROVERBS 10: 31 The mouth of the righteous produces wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off.

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Verse 31

The froward tongue shall be cut out - This probably alludes to the punishment of cutting out the tongue for blasphemy, treasonable speeches, profane swearing, or such like. The tunge of schrewis schal perishen. - Old MS. Bible. Were the tongue of every shrew or scold to be extracted, we should soon have much less noise in the world.

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PROVERBS 10: 32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked is perverse.

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Verse 32

The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable - And what they believe to be most pleasing and most profitable, that they speak, but the wicked man knows as well what is perverse, and that he speaketh forth. As the love of God is not in his heart, so the law of kindness is not on his lips.