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PROVERBS 23: 1 When you sit to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before you;

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Sobriety in eating and drinking, especially at the tables of the great. Have no fellowship with the covetous. Remove not the ancient landmark. Children should receive due correction. Avoid the company of wine-bibbers. Obedience to parents. Avoid lewd connections. The effect of an unfeeling conscience.

Verse 1

When thou sittest to eat with a ruler - When invited to the table of thy betters, eat moderately. Do not appear as if half starved at home. Eat not of delicacies to which thou art not accustomed; they are deceitful meat; they please, but they do not profit. They are pleasant to the sight, the taste, and the smell; but they are injurious to health. These are prudential cautions; and should be carefully observed by all who would avoid the conduct of a clown, and desire to pass for a well-bred man.

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PROVERBS 23: 2 put a knife to your throat, if you are a man given to appetite.

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Verse 2

Put a knife to thy throat - Repress thy appetite, and do not be incontinent of speech. Eat, drink, and converse, under a check.

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PROVERBS 23: 3 Don't be desirous of his dainties, since they are deceitful food.

PROVERBS 23: 4 Don't weary yourself to be rich. In your wisdom, show restraint.

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Verse 4

Labour not to be rich - Let not this be thy object. Labour to provide things honest in the sight of God and all men; and if thou get wealth, do not forget the poor, else God's curse will be a canker even in thy gold.

Cease from thine own wisdom - *בִּינְתֶךָ* binathecha, thy own understanding or prudence. The world says, "Get rich if thou canst, and how thou canst." Rem, si possis, recte; si non, quocunque modo rem; "Get a fortune honestly if thou canst; but if not, get one at all events." This is the devil's counsel, and well it is followed; but Solomon says, and God says, "Cease from thine own counsel." Thou hast an immortal soul, and shalt shortly appear before God. Lay up treasure for heaven, and be rich towards God.

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PROVERBS 23: 5 Why do you set your eyes on that which is not? For it certainly sprouts wings like an eagle and flies in the sky.

PROVERBS 23: 6 Don't eat the food of him who has a stingy eye, and don't crave his delicacies:

Verse 6

Of him that hath an evil eye - Never eat with a covetous or stingy man; if he entertains you at his own expense, he grudges every morsel you put in your mouth. This is well marked by the wise man in the next verse: "Eat and drink, saith he: but his heart is not with thee."

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PROVERBS 23: 7 for as he thinks about the cost, so he is. "Eat and drink!" he says to you, but his heart is not with you.

PROVERBS 23: 8 The morsel which you have eaten you shall vomit up, and lose your good words.

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Verse 8

The morsel which thou hast eaten - On reflection thou wilt even blame thyself for having accepted his invitation.

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PROVERBS 23: 9 Don't speak in the ears of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words.

PROVERBS 23: 10 Don't move the ancient boundary stone. Don't encroach on the fields of the fatherless:

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Verse 10

Remove not the old landmark - See Pro 22:28 (note).

Enter not into the fields of the fatherless - Take nothing that belongs to an orphan. The heaviest curse of God will fall upon them that do so.

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PROVERBS 23: 11 for their Defender is strong. He will plead their case against you.

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Verse 11

For their redeemer is mighty - גֹּאֲלָם goalam, their kinsman. The word means the person who has a right, being next in blood, to redeem a field or estate, alienated from the family, to avenge the blood of a murdered relative, by slaying the murderer; and to take to wife a brother's widow, who had died childless, in order to preserve the family. The strength here mentioned refers to the justness of his claim, the extent of his influence, and the powerful abettors of such a cause. But in reference to the orphans here mentioned, they having no kinsman, God takes up, vindicates, and avenges their cause.

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PROVERBS 23: 12 Apply your heart to instruction, and your ears to the words of knowledge.

PROVERBS 23: 13 Don't withhold correction from a child. If you punish him with the rod, he will not die.

PROVERBS 23: 14 Punish him with the rod, and save his soul from Sheol.

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Verse 14

Thou shalt beat him with the rod - A proper correction of children was a favourite point of discipline with Solomon. We have already seen how forcibly he speaks on this subject. See the notes on the places referred to in 1Cor 5:5 (note).

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PROVERBS 23: 15 My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad, even mine:

PROVERBS 23: 16 yes, my heart will rejoice, when your lips speak what is right.

PROVERBS 23: 17 Don't let your heart envy sinners; but rather fear the LORD all the day long.

PROVERBS 23: 18 Indeed surely there is a future hope, and your hope will not be cut off.

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Verse 18

Surely there is an end - יש אחרית yesh acharith, there is another life; "and thy expectation" of the enjoyment of a blessed immortality "shall not be cut off." The Old MS. Bible reads thus: For thou shalt hab hop in the last: and thin abiiding schal not ben taken awei. "For the ende is not yet come; and thy patient abydinge shal not be in vayne." - Coverdale.

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PROVERBS 23: 19 Listen, my son, and be wise, and keep your heart on the right path!

PROVERBS 23: 20 Don't be among ones drinking too much wine, or those who gorge themselves on meat:

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Verse 20

Be not among winebibbers - There is much of this chapter spent in giving directions concerning eating, drinking, and entertainments in general.

1. he pupil is directed relative to the manner in which he is to conduct himself in his visits to the tables of the rich and great.

2. Relative to the covetous and his intercourse with them. And

3. To public entertainments, where there were generally riot and debauch.

The reasons, says Calmet, which induced the wise man to give these directions were,

1. The useless expense.

2. The loss of time.

3. The danger from bad company. And

4. The danger of contracting irregular habits, and of being induced to lead a voluptuous and effeminate life.

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PROVERBS 23: 21 for the drunkard and the glutton shall become poor; and drowsiness clothes them in rags.

PROVERBS 23: 22 Listen to your father who gave you life, and don't despise your mother when she is old.

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#### Verse 22

Despise not thy mother when she is old - A very necessary caution, as very old women are generally helpless, useless, and burdensome: yet these circumstances do not at all lessen the child's duty. And this duty is strengthened by the Divine command here given.

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PROVERBS 23: 23 Buy the truth, and don't sell it. Get wisdom, discipline, and understanding.

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#### Verse 23

Buy the truth - Acquire the knowledge of God at all events; and in order to do this, too much pains, industry, and labor cannot be expended.

And sell it not - When once acquired, let no consideration deprive thee of it. Cleave to and guard it, even at the risk of thy life. Coverdale translates: "Labour for to get the treuth; sell not awaye wissdome."

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PROVERBS 23: 24 The father of the righteous has great joy. Whoever fathers a wise child delights in him.

PROVERBS 23: 25 Let your father and your mother be glad! Let her who bore you rejoice!

PROVERBS 23: 26 My son, give me your heart; and let your eyes keep in my ways.

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#### Verse 26

My son, give me thine heart - This is the speech of God to every human soul; give thy affections to God, so as to love him with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength.

And let thine eyes observe my ways - Be obedient to me in all things. My son, thou believest that I Am, and that I Am the Fountain of all good. Give me thy heart; it is I alone who can make thee happy. Observe my ways - follow me; do what is right in my sight. This exhortation contains three words: Believe, Love, Obey! This is the sum of God's counsels to every child of man.

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PROVERBS 23: 27 For a prostitute is a deep pit; and a wayward wife is a narrow well.

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Verse 27

For a whore is a deep ditch - See on Pro 22:14 (note).

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PROVERBS 23: 28 Yes, she lies in wait like a robber, and increases the unfaithful among men.

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Verse 28

Increaseth the transgressors among men - More iniquity springs from this one source of evil, than from any other cause in the whole system of sin. Women and strong drink cause many millions to transgress.

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PROVERBS 23: 29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?

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Verse 29

Who hath wo? - I believe Solomon refers here to the natural effects of drunkenness. And perhaps וי אוי oi, which we translate wo, and אבוי aboi, which we translate sorrow, are mere natural sounds or vociferations that take place among drunken men, either from illness, or the nauseating effects of too much liquor. As to contentions among such, babblings on a variety of subjects, which they neither understand nor are fit to discuss; wounds, got by falling out about nothing; and red eyes, bloodshot with excess of drink, or black and blue eyes with fighting; - these are such common and general effects of these computations, as naturally to follow from them. So that they who tarry long at wine, and use mixed wine to make it more inebriating, (see Pro 9:2), are the very persons who are most distinguished by the circumstances enumerated above. I need scarcely add, that by wine and mixed wine all inebriating liquors are to be understood.

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PROVERBS 23: 30 Those who stay long at the wine; those who go to seek out mixed wine.

PROVERBS 23: 31 Don't look at the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly.

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Verse 31

Look not thou upon the wine - Let neither the color, the odour, the sparkling, etc., of the wine, when poured out, induce thee to drink of it. However good and pure it may be, it will to thee be a snare, because thou art addicted to it, and hast no self-command.

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PROVERBS 23: 32 In the end, it bites like a snake, and poisons like a viper.

PROVERBS 23: 33 Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind will imagine confusing things.

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Verse 33

Thine eyes shall behold strange women - Evil concupiscence is inseparable from drunkenness. Mr. Herbert shows these effects well: -

He that is drunken may his mother kill, Big with his sister: he hath lost the reins;

Is outlawed by himself. All kinds of ill Did, with his liquor, slide into his veins.

The drunkard forfeits man; and doth divest All worldly right, save what he hath by beast.

Herbert's Poems - The Church Porch.

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PROVERBS 23: 34 Yes, you will be as he who lies down in the midst of the sea, or as he who lies on top of the rigging:

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Verse 34

Lieth down in the midst of the sea - He is utterly regardless of life; which is expressed very forcibly by one in a state of intoxication ascending the shrouds, clasping the mast-head, and there falling asleep; whence, in a few moments, he must either fall down upon the deck and be dashed to pieces, or fall into the sea and be drowned. Reader, if thou be a man given to this appetite, put a knife to thy throat.

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PROVERBS 23: 35 "They hit me, and I was not hurt! They beat me, and I don't feel it! When will I wake up? I can do it again. I can find another."

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Verse 35

They have stricken me - Though beat and abused, full of pain, and exhibiting a frightful figure; yet so drunk was he, as to be insensible who had struck him: still, after all this abuse and disgrace, he purposes to embrace the next opportunity of repeating his excesses! Sin makes a man contemptible in life, miserable in death, and wretched to all eternity. Is it not strange, then, that men should Love it?