

PROVERBS 24: 1 Don't be envious of evil men; neither desire to be with them:

Do not be envious. Of the house wisely built. Counsel necessary in war. Save life when thou canst. Of honey and the honey-comb. Of the just that falleth seven times. We should not rejoice at the misfortune of others. Ruin of the wicked. Fear God and the king. Prepare thy work. The field of the sluggard, and the vineyard of the foolish, described.

PROVERBS 24: 2 for their hearts plot violence, and their lips talk about mischief.

PROVERBS 24: 3 Through wisdom a house is built; by understanding it is established;

Verse 3

Through wisdom is a house blinded - That is, a family; household affairs. See the notes on Pro 9:1 (note), etc.

PROVERBS 24: 4 by knowledge the rooms are filled with all rare and beautiful treasure.

PROVERBS 24: 5 A wise man has great power; and a knowledgeable man increases strength;

Verse 5

A wise man is strong - His wisdom enables him to construct a great variety of machines, by which, under his own influence, he can do the labor of a hundred or even a thousand men. But in all cases wisdom gives power and influence; and he who is wise to salvation can overcome even Satan himself. The Septuagint has: "The wise is better than the strong; and the man who has prudence, than a stout husbandman."

PROVERBS 24: 6 for by wise guidance you wage your war; and victory is in many advisors.

Verse 6

By wise counsel thou shalt make thy war - See note on Pro 20:18.

PROVERBS 24: 7 Wisdom is too high for a fool: he doesn't open his mouth in the gate.

Verse 7

A fool - openeth not his mouth in the gate - Is not put into public offices of trust and responsibility.

PROVERBS 24: 8 One who plots to do evil will be called a schemer.

PROVERBS 24: 9 The schemes of folly are sin. The mocker is detested by men.

Verse 9

The thought of foolishness is sin - זממת אולת חטאת zimmath ivveleth chattath. "The device of folly is transgression;" or, "an evil purpose is sinful;" or, perhaps more literally, "the device of the foolish is sin." It has been variously understood by the versions. "The cunning: of the fool is sin." - Targum. "The imprudent man (or fool, αφρωσ) shall die in sins." - Septuagint.

So the Arabic.

The thinkynge of the fool is synne - Old MS. Bible.

Fool is here taken for a wicked man, who is not only evil in his actions, but every thought of his heart is evil, and that continually. A simple thought about foolishness, or about sin itself, is not sinful; it is the purpose or device, the harbouring evil thoughts, and devising how to sin, that is criminal.

PROVERBS 24: 10 If you falter in the time of trouble, your strength is small.

Verse 10

If thou faint - If thou give way to discouragement and despair in the day of adversity - time of trial or temptation.

Thy strength is small - צר כחכה tsar cochachah, thy strength is contracted. So the old MS. Bible excellently: Gif sliden thou dispeire, in the dai of anguyfs, schal be made lilit thy strengthe. In times of trial we should endeavor to be doubly courageous; when a man loses his courage, his strength avails him nothing.

PROVERBS 24: 11 Rescue those who are being led away to death! Indeed, hold back those who are staggering to the slaughter!

Verse 11

If thou forbear to deliver - If thou seest the innocent taken by the hand of lawless power or superstitious zeal, and they are about to be put to death, thou shouldst rise up in their behalf, boldly plead for them, testify to their innocence when thou knowest it; and thus thou wilt not be guilty of blood; which thou wouldst be, if, through any pretense, thou shouldst neglect to save the life of a man unjustly condemned.

PROVERBS 24: 12 If you say, "Behold, we didn't know this"; doesn't he who weighs the hearts consider it?

He who keeps your soul, doesn't he know it? Shall he not render to every man according to his work?

PROVERBS 24: 13 My son, eat honey, for it is good; the droppings of the honeycomb, which are sweet to your taste:

Verse 13

And the honey-comb - I have often had occasion to remark how much finer the flavour of honey is in the honey-comb than it is after it has been expressed from it, and exposed to the action of the air. But it has been asserted that the honey-comb is never eaten; it must be by those who have no acquaintance with the apiary. I have seen the comb with its contained honey eaten frequently, and of it I have repeatedly partaken. And that our Lord ate it, is evident from Luk 24:42. Nor can any man who has not eaten it in this way feel the full force of the allusions to the honey-comb and its sweetness in several parts of the sacred writings. See 1Sam 14:27; Psa 19:10; Pro 5:3; Pro 16:24; Pro 27:7; Sol 4:11; Sol 5:1; and the place before us.

PROVERBS 24: 14 so you shall know wisdom to be to your soul; if you have found it, then there will be a reward, your hope will not be cut off.

Verse 14

So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul - True religion, experimental godliness, shall be to thy soul as the honey-comb is to thy mouth.

Then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off - This is precisely the same with that in Pro 23:18 (note), where see the note. The word אחרית *acharith*, we translate in the former place an end, and here we translate it a reward; but there is no place I believe in the sacred writings in which it has any such acceptance; nor can such a meaning be deduced from the root אחר *achar*, which always refers to behind, after, extremity, latter part, time, etc., but never carries the idea of recompense, compensation, or such like; nor has one of the versions understood it so. There is another state or life, and thy expectation of happiness in a future world shall not be cut off. In this sense the versions all understood it. I will take them as they lie before me. "Which (wisdom) when thou shalt have found, thou shalt have hope in thy last days; and thy hope shall not perish." - Vulgate. "And if thou find it, thou shalt have a good death; and hope shall not forsake thee." - Septuagint. "Which, if thou have found, thy latter days shall be better than the former; and thy hope shall not be consumed." - Chaldee. "There shall be an end, and thy hope shall not be cut off." - Syriac. "For, if thou shalt find her, (wisdom), thy death shall be glorious, and thy hope will not fail thee." - Arabic.

Whiche whan thou fyndist schalt han in the last thingis, hope: and thin hope schal not perischen - Old MS. Bible. "And there is Good Hope; yee that hope shal not be in vayne." - Coverdale.

This rendering is indefinite, which is not the usual custom of the translator.

PROVERBS 24: 15 Don't lay in wait, wicked man, against the habitation of the righteous. Don't destroy his resting place:

Verse 15

The dwelling of the righteous - צַדִּיק tsaddik, the man who is walking unblameably in all the testimonies of God; who is rendering to every man his due.

PROVERBS 24: 16 for a righteous man falls seven times, and rises up again; but the wicked are overthrown by calamity.

Verse 16

For a just man - צַדִּיק tsaddik, the righteous, the same person mentioned above.

Falleth seven times - Gets very often into distresses through his resting place being spoiled by the wicked man, the robber, the spoiler of the desert, lying in wait for this purpose, Pro 24:15.

And riseth up again - Though God permit the hand of violence sometimes to spoil his tent, temptations to assail his mind, and afflictions to press down his body, he constantly emerges; and every time he passes through the furnace, he comes out brighter and more refined.

But the wicked shall fall into mischief - And there they shall lie; having no strong arm to uphold them. Yet,

PROVERBS 24: 17 Don't rejoice when your enemy falls. Don't let your heart be glad when he is overthrown;

Verse 17

Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, (into this mischief), and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth - When he meets with any thing that injures him; for God will not have thee to avenge thyself, or feel any disposition contrary to love; for if thou do, the Lord will be angry, and may turn away his wrath from him, and pour it out on thee.

This I believe to be the true sense of these verses: but we must return to the sixteenth, as that has been most sinfully misrepresented.

For a just man falleth seven times - That is, say many, "the most righteous man in the world sins seven times a day on an average." Solomon does not say so: -

1. There is not a word about sin in the text.
2. The word day is not in the Hebrew text, nor in any of the versions.
3. The word יפול yippol, from נפל naphal, to fall, is never applied to sin.

4. When set in opposition to the words riseth up, it merely applies to affliction or calamity. See Mic 7:8; Amo 8:4; Jer 25:27; and Psa 34:19, Psa 34:20. "The righteous falls into trouble." See above.

Mr. Holden has a very judicious note on this passage: "Injure not a righteous man; for, though he frequently falls into distress, yet, by the superintending care of Providence, 'he riseth up again,' is delivered from his distress, while the wicked are overwhelmed with their misfortunes. That this is the meaning is plain from the preceding and following verses: yet some expound it by the just man often relapsing into sin, and recovering from it; nay, it has even been adduced to prove the doctrine of the final perseverance of the elect. But נפל is never used for falling into sin, but into distress and affliction - as Pro 11:5, Pro 11:14; Pro 13:17; Pro 17:20; Pro 26:27; Pro 28:10, Pro 28:14, Pro 28:18."

PROVERBS 24: 18 lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.

Verse 18

And he turn away his wrath from him - Wrath is here taken for the effect of wrath, punishment; and the meaning must be as paraphrased above - lest he take the punishment from him, and inflict it upon thee. And in this way Coverdale understood it: "Lest the Lorde be angry, and turn his wrath from him unto thee." Or we may understand it thus: Lest the Lord inflict on thee a similar punishment; for if thou get into his spirit, rejoicing in the calamities of another, thou deservest punishment.

PROVERBS 24: 19 Don't fret yourself because of evildoers; neither be envious of the wicked:

PROVERBS 24: 20 for there will be no reward to the evil man; and the lamp of the wicked shall be snuffed out.

Verse 20

For there shall be no reboard to the evil man - אחרית-ת-אחרית acharith. There shall not be the future state of blessedness to the wicked. See the note on Pro 24:14 (note). His candle shall be put out; his prosperity shall finally cease, or he shall have no posterity. Some have thought that this text intimates the annihilation of sinners; but it refers not to being, but to the state or condition of that being. The wicked shall be; but they shall not be Happy.

PROVERBS 24: 21 My son, fear the LORD and the king. Don't join those who are rebellious:

Verse 21

My son, fear thou the Lord and the king - Pay to each the homage due: to the Lord, Divine honor and adoration; to the king, civil respect, civil honor, and political obedience.

Meddle not with them that are given to change - עם שונים אל תתערב im shonim al titharab: "And with the changelings mingle not thyself." The innovators; those who are always for making

experiments on modes of government, forms of religion, etc. The most dangerous spirit that can infect the human mind.

PROVERBS 24: 22 for their calamity will rise suddenly; the destruction from them both—who knows?

Verse 22

The ruin of them both? - Of them who do not fear the Lord; and of them that do not reverence the King.

PROVERBS 24: 23 These also are sayings of the wise.

To show partiality in judgement is not good.

Verse 23

These things also belong to the wise - גם אלה לחכמים gam elleh lachachamim, "These also to wise." This appears to be a new section; and perhaps, what follows belongs to another collection. Probably fragments of sayings collected by wise men from the Proverbs of Solomon.

It is not good to have respect - Judgment and justice should never be perverted.

PROVERBS 24: 24 He who says to the wicked, "You are righteous"; peoples shall curse him, and nations shall abhor him—

PROVERBS 24: 25 but it will go well with those who convict the guilty, and a rich blessing will come on them.

PROVERBS 24: 26 An honest answer is like a kiss on the lips.

Verse 26

Kiss his lips - Shall treat him with affection and respect.

PROVERBS 24: 27 Prepare your work outside, and get your fields ready. Afterwards, build your house.

Verse 27

Prepare thy work without - Do nothing without a plan. In winter prepare seed, implements, tackle, geers, etc., for seed-time and harvest.

PROVERBS 24: 28 Don't be a witness against your neighbour without cause. Don't deceive with your lips.

Verse 28

Be not a witness - Do not be forward to offer thyself to bear testimony against a neighbor, in a matter which may prejudice him, where the essential claims of justice do not require such interference; and especially do not do this in a spirit of revenge, because he has injured thee before.

PROVERBS 24: 29 Don't say, "I will do to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work."

PROVERBS 24: 30 I went by the field of the sluggard, by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

Verse 30

I went by the field of the slothful - This is a most instructive parable; is exemplified every day in a variety of forms; and is powerfully descriptive of the state of many a blackslider and trifler in religion. Calmet has an excellent note on this passage. I shall give the substance of it.

Solomon often recommends diligence and economy to his disciples. In those primitive times when agriculture was honorable, no man was respected who neglected to cultivate his grounds, who sunk into poverty, contracted debt, or engaged in ruinous securities. With great propriety, a principal part of wisdom was considered by them as consisting in the knowledge of properly conducting one's domestic affairs, and duly cultivating the inheritances derived from their ancestors. Moses had made a law to prevent the rich from utterly depressing the poor, by obliging them to return their farms to them on the Sabbatic year, and to remit all debts at the year of jubilee.

In the civil state of the Hebrews, we never see those enormous and suddenly raised fortunes, which never subsist but in the ruin of numberless families. One of the principal solitudes of this legislator was to produce, as far as possible in a monarchical state, an equality of property and condition. The ancient Romans held agriculture in the same estimation, and highly respected those who had applied themselves to it with success. When they spoke in praise of a man, they considered themselves as giving no mean commendation when they called him a good husbandman, an excellent laborer. From such men they formed their most valiant generals and intrepid soldiers. Cato De Re Rustica, cap. 1. The property which is acquired by these means is most innocent, most solid, and exposes its possessor less to envy than property acquired in any other way. See Cicero De Officiis, lib. 1. In Britain the merchant is all in all; and yet the waves of the sea are not more uncertain, nor more tumultuous, than the property acquired in this way, or than the agitated life of the speculative merchant.

But let us look more particularly into this very instructive parable: -

I. The owner is described.

1. He was **עצל איש** ish atsel, the loitering, sluggish, slothful man.

2. He was לב חסר אדם adam chasar leb, a man that wanted heart; destitute of courage, alacrity, and decision of mind.

II. His circumstances. This man had,

1. שדה sadeh, a sowed field, arable ground. This was the character of his estate. It was meadow and corn land.

2. He had כרם kerem, a vineyard, what we would call perhaps garden and orchard, where he might employ his skill to great advantage in raising various kinds of fruits and culinary herbs for the support of his family.

III. The state of this heritage:

1. "It was grown over with thorns." It had been long neglected, so that even brambles were permitted to grow in the fields:

2. "Nettles had covered the face thereof." It was not weeded, and all kinds of rubbish had been suffered to multiply:

3. "The stone wall was broken down." This belonged to the vineyard: it was neither pruned nor digged; and the fence, for want of timely repairs, had all fallen into ruins, Pro 24:31.

IV. The effect all this had on the attentive observer.

1. I saw it, אחזה אנכי echezeh anochi, I fixed my attention on it. I found it was no mere report. It is a fact. I myself was an eyewitness of it.

2. I considered it well, אשית לבי ashith libbi, I put my heart on it. All my feelings were interested.

3. I looked upon it, רעיתי raithi, I took an intellectual view of it. And

4. Thus I received instruction, לקחתי מוסר lakachti musar, I received a very important lesson from it: but the owner paid no attention to it. He alone was uninstructed; for he "slumbered, slept, and kept his hands in his bosom." Pro 24:33. "Hugged himself in his sloth and carelessness."

V. The consequences of this conduct.

1. Poverty described as coming like a traveler, making sure steps every hour coming nearer and nearer to the door.

2. Want, מחסר machsor, total destitution; want of all the necessities, conveniences, and comforts of life; and this is described as coming like an armed man מגן כאיש keish magen, as a man with a shield, who comes to destroy this unprofitable servant: or it may refer to a man coming with what we call an execution into the house, armed with the law, to take even his bed from the slumberer.

From this literal solution any minister of God may make a profitable discourse.

PROVERBS 24: 31 Behold, it was all grown over with thorns. Its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down.

PROVERBS 24: 32 Then I saw, and considered well. I saw, and received instruction:

PROVERBS 24: 33 a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep;

PROVERBS 24: 34 so your poverty will come as a robber, and your want as an armed man.
