
PROVERBS 26: 1 Like snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not fitting for a fool.

Honor is not seemly in a fool. The correction and treatment suitable to such. Of the slothful man. Of him who interferes with matters which do not concern him. Contentions to be avoided. Of the dissembler and the lying tongue.

Verse 1

As snow in summer - None of these is suitable to the time; and at this unsuitable time, both are unwelcome: so a fool to be in honor is unbecoming.

PROVERBS 26: 2 Like a fluttering sparrow, like a darting swallow, so the undeserved curse doesn't come to rest.

Verse 2

As the bird - ציפור *tsippor* is taken often for the sparrow; but means generally any small bird. As the sparrow flies about the house, and the swallow emigrates to strange countries; so an undeserved malediction may flutter about the neighborhood for a season: but in a short time it will disappear as the bird of passage; and never take effect on the innocent person against whom it was pronounced.

PROVERBS 26: 3 A whip is for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back of fools!

Verse 3

A whip for the horse - Correction is as suitable to a fool, as a whip is for a horse, or a bridle for an ass.

PROVERBS 26: 4 Don't answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him.

Verse 4

Answer not a fool - On this and the following verse Bishop Warburton, who has written well on many things, and very indifferently on the doctrine of grace, has written with force and perspicuity: "Had this advice been given simply, and without circumstance, to answer the fool, and not to answer him, one who had reverence for the text would satisfy himself in supposing that the different directions referred to the doing a thing in and out of season;

1. The reasons given why a fool should not be answered according to his folly, is, "lest he (the answerer) should be like unto him."

2. The reason given why the fool should be answered according to his folly, is, "lest he (the fool) should be wise in his own conceit."

1. "The cause assigned for forbidding to answer, therefore, plainly insinuates that the defender of religion should not imitate the insulter of it in his modes of disputation, which may be comprised in sophistry, buffoonery, and scurrility.

2. "The cause assigned for directing to answer, as plainly intimates that the sage should address himself to confute the fool upon his own false principles, by showing that they lead to conclusions very wide from, very opposite to, those impieties he would deduce from them. If any thing can allay the fool's vanity, and prevent his being wise in his own conceit, it must be the dishonor of having his own principles turned against himself, and shown to be destructive of his own conclusions." - Treatise on Grace. Preface.

PROVERBS 26: 5 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

PROVERBS 26: 6 One who sends a message by the hand of a fool is cutting off feet and drinking violence.

Verse 6

Cutteth off the feet - Sending by such a person is utterly useless. My old MS. Bible translates well: Halt in feet and drinking wickednesse that sendith wordis bi a foole messenger. Nothing but lameness in himself can vindicate his sending it by such hands; and, after all, the expedient will be worse than the total omission, for he is likely to drink wickedness, i.e., the mischief occasioned by the fool's misconduct. Coverdale nearly hits the sense as usual: "He is lame of his fete, yee dronken is he in vanite, that committeth eny thinge to a foole."

PROVERBS 26: 7 Like the legs of the lame that hang loose: so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

PROVERBS 26: 8 As one who binds a stone in a sling, so is he who gives honour to a fool.

Verse 8

As he that bindeth a stone in a sling, so is he that giveth honor to a fool - It is entirely thrown away. This, however, is a difficult proverb; and the versions give but little light on the subject. The Hebrew may be translated, "As a piece of precious stone among a heap of stones, so is he that giveth honor to a fool." Or, As he that putteth a precious stone in a heap of stones. See Parkhurst: but on this interpretation the meaning would rather be, "It is as useless to throw a jewel among a heap of stones to increase its bulk, as to give honor to a fool."

As he that sendith a stoon into a hepe of monee; so he that geveth to an unwiisman wirschip - Old MS. Bible. "He that setteth a foole in hye dignite, that is even as yf a man dyd caste a precious stone upon the galous." - Coverdale. This translator refers to the custom of throwing a stone to the heap under which a criminal lay buried. The Vulgate gives some countenance to this translation: "He who gives honor to a fool is like one who throws a stone to Mercury's heap." Mercury was considered the

deity who presided over the highways; and stones were erected in different places to guide the traveler. Hence those lines of Dr. Young: - "Death stands like Mercuries in every way;

And kindly points us to our journey's end."

PROVERBS 26: 9 Like a thorn bush that goes into the hand of a drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.

PROVERBS 26: 10 As an archer who wounds all, so is he who hires a fool or he who hires those who pass by.

Verse 10

The great God that formed all things - Or, A great man grieveth all, and he hireth the fool, he hireth also transgressors, where this verse is very differently translated. I shall add that of Coverdale: "A man of experience discerneth all thinges well: but whoso hyreth a foole, hyreth soch one as wyl take no hede." The רב rab may mean either the great God, or a great man: hence the two renderings, in the text and in the margin.

PROVERBS 26: 11 As a dog that returns to his vomit, so is a fool who repeats his folly.

Verse 11

As a dog returneth to his vomit - See note on 2Pet 2:22.

PROVERBS 26: 12 Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

PROVERBS 26: 13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion roams the streets!"

Verse 13

The slothful man saith - See the note on Pro 22:13 (note).

PROVERBS 26: 14 As the door turns on its hinges, so does the sluggard on his bed.

PROVERBS 26: 15 The sluggard buries his hand in the dish. He is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.

PROVERBS 26: 16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who answer with discretion.

Verse 16

Than seven men that can render a reason - Seven here only means perfection, abundance, or multitude. He is wiser in his own eyes than a multitude of the wisest men. "Than seven men that sytt and teach." - Coverdale; i.e., than seven doctors of the law, or heads of the schools of the prophets, who always sat while they taught.

PROVERBS 26: 17 Like one who grabs a dog's ears is one who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own.

Verse 17

He that passeth by - This proverb stands true ninety-nine times out of a hundred, where people meddle with domestic broils, or differences between men and their wives.

PROVERBS 26: 18 Like a madman who shoots torches, arrows, and death,

PROVERBS 26: 19 is the man who deceives his neighbour and says, "Am I not joking?"

Verse 19

Am not I in sport? - How many hearts have been made sad, and how many reputations have been slain, by this kind of sport! "I designed no harm by what I said;" "It was only in jest," etc. Sportive as such persons may think their conduct to be, it is as ruinous as that of the mad man who shoots arrows, throws firebrands, and projects in all directions instruments of death, so that some are wounded, some burnt, and some slain.

PROVERBS 26: 20 For lack of wood a fire goes out. Without gossip, a quarrel dies down.

Verse 20

Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out - The tale-receiver and the tale-bearer are the agents of discord. If none received the slander in the first instance, it could not be propagated. Hence our proverb, "The receiver is as bad as the thief." And our laws treat them equally; for the receiver of stolen goods, knowing them to be stolen, is hanged, as well as he who stole them.

PROVERBS 26: 21 As coals are to hot embers, and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindling strife.

PROVERBS 26: 22 The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels, they go down into the innermost parts.

Verse 22

The words of a tale-bearer - The same with Pro 18:8 (note), where see the note.

PROVERBS 26: 23 Like silver dross on an earthen vessel are the lips of a fervent one with an evil heart.

Verse 23

Burning lips and a wicked heart - Splendid, shining, smooth lips; that is, lips which make great professions of friendship are like a vessel plated over with base metal to make it resemble silver; but it is only a vile pot, and even the outside is not pure.

PROVERBS 26: 24 A malicious man disguises himself with his lips, but he harbours evil in his heart.

PROVERBS 26: 25 When his speech is charming, don't believe him; for there are seven abominations in his heart.

Verse 25

When he speaketh fair - For there are such hypocrites and false friends in the world.

Believe him not - Let all his professions go for nothing.

For there are seven abominations in his heart - That is, he is full of abominations.

PROVERBS 26: 26 His malice may be concealed by deception, but his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly.

PROVERBS 26: 27 Whoever digs a pit shall fall into it. Whoever rolls a stone, it will come back on him.

Verse 27

Whoso diggeth a pit - See note on Psa 7:15. There is a Latin proverb like this: *Malum consilium consultori pessimum*, "A bad counsel, but worst to the giver." Harm watch; harm catch.

PROVERBS 26: 28 A lying tongue hates those it hurts; and a flattering mouth works ruin.

Verse 28

A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it - He that injures another hates him in proportion to the injury he has done him; and, strange to tell, in proportion to the innocence of the oppressed. The debtor cannot bear the sight of his creditor; nor the knave, of him whom he has injured.

