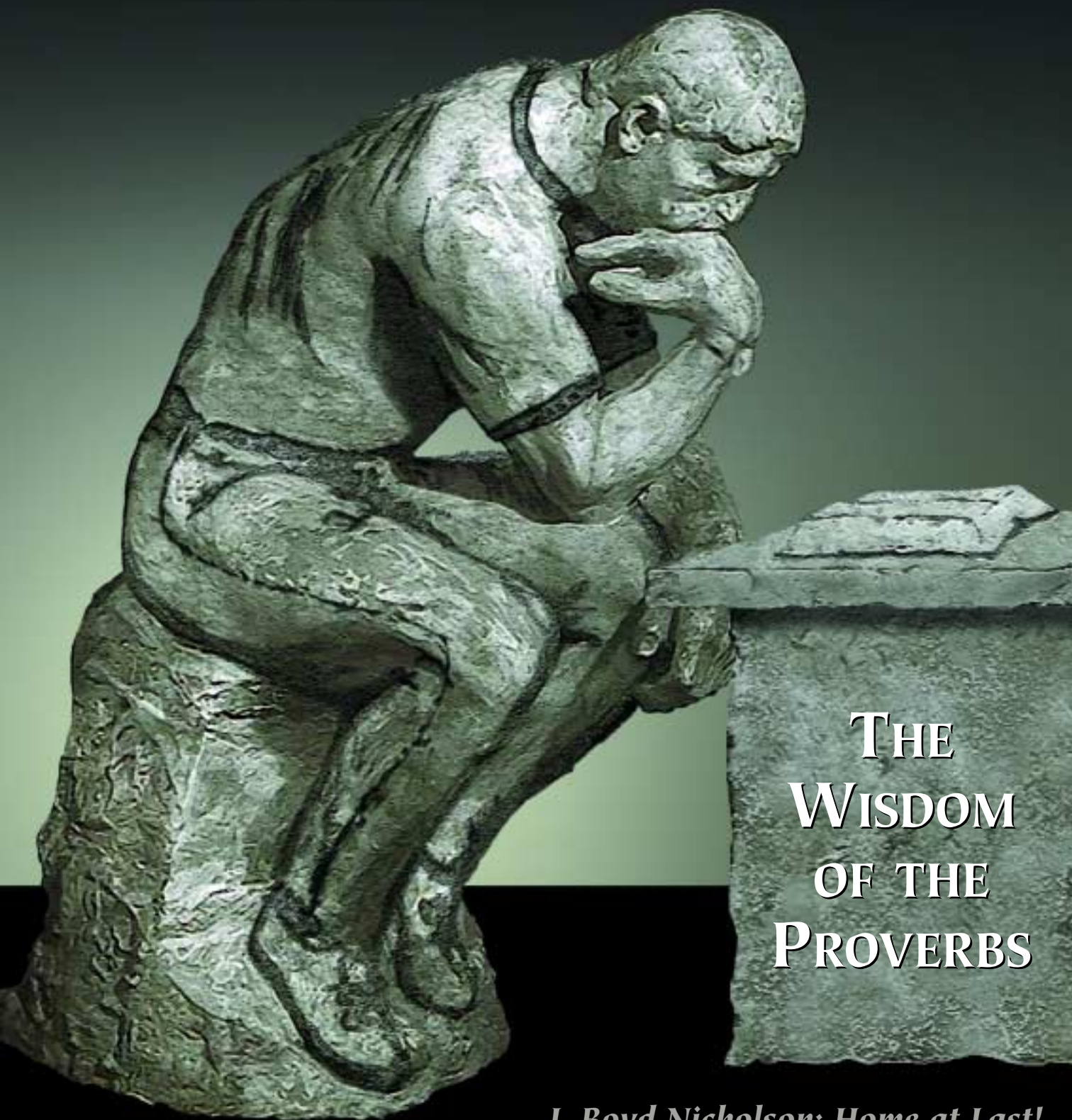


# UPLOOK

WINTER ISSUE

DEC. 2000/JAN. 2001



## THE WISDOM OF THE PROVERBS

*J. Boyd Nicholson: Home at Last!*

# SENTENTIOUS!

*What is marked by an economy of words and an abundance of meaning?*

I've never used the word before in public. An opportunity like this rarely comes. I dare say you could live a full life without ever using it. But it seems well nigh impossible to write about the Book of Proverbs without slipping it in somewhere. The word? Sententious. Now I know some of you will immediately protest, "Why, I use that word. Doesn't everyone?"

Sidlow Baxter does in *Explore the Book*: "The English word 'proverb' means a brief saying in the stead of many words (*pro* = for; *verba* = words). In popular usage it signifies any pithy, sententious saying or terse maxim. The Hebrew word, however, which we translate as 'proverbs' (*mishle*) has a much wider meaning, and is used of many discourses, sentences, and expressions which would not be classed as proverbs in English today... The genius of a proverb lies in its shrewd concentration of a truth or of some sagacious counsel in a terse and striking way, so that it catches on, and becomes easier to remember" (p. 132).

E. W. Bullinger's *Companion Bible* slips it in with his introduction: "TITLE. The Proverbs. Heb. *Mishlai*; Greek, *Paroimiai* = any dark sententious saying; Vulg. *Proverbia*. Whence the English name" (p. 865).

Even H. A. Ironside, thought to be the prince of clear and forthright exposition, thinks it the right word for the occasion: "To the general reader, the book of Proverbs, with its common-sense epigrams and sententious aphorisms, might seem to be the last portion of Scripture requiring any attempt at elucidation. But it is just because its chapters abound in pithy truisms that the marrow is often lost sight of by those who have been accustomed to hearing or reading them all of their lives" (*Notes on Proverbs*, Prefatory Note).

But William Kelly (often presumed to be difficult reading) doesn't use the word "sententious" once in his helpful explanation. He writes: "As a proverb is a compressed parable, or an expanded comparison, so it often borders on the riddle or enigma in order to fix attention" (*The Proverbs*, p. 9).

So in these few paragraphs you have read the word "sententious" no less than seven times! And what does it mean? Webster's Dictionary gives its definition as:

"adj [ME, full of meaning, fr. L *sententiosus*, fr. *sententia*, sentence, maxim] 1: terse, aphoristic, or moralistic in expression; PITHY, EPIGRAMMATIC."

I don't think my father-in-law ever used the word "sententious" even though he read a chapter in the Proverbs every day. After a while he thought in proverbs, talked in proverbs, and lived out proverbs in

his daily experience. He never used ten words when five would do. His name was John Funk. Eight letters. Monosyllabic. No middle initial.

I never remember him preaching alone. He would have three or four young men in tow. One would just read a passage of Scripture. One would open in prayer. One would give a testimony; another, a gospel message. And he would finish up. I was

one of the young men he encouraged in this way. And there were many others.

He didn't care how much people said as long as they said it in few words. That's why he liked the Proverbs. He'd tell us, "If the fish hadn't opened his mouth, he wouldn't have got caught." Sometimes in his prayers he would quote Proverbs 10:19, "*In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.*" He would remind us that multiplying words in the presence of the Lord was an unwise thing to do. And then he showed us by keeping his prayers to the point.

He was an honest businessman who lived Proverbs in the workplace. When Revenue Canada refused to allow him his full deductions for business expenses, explaining that "everyone inflates the numbers," he placed his ledgers on their counter, and said, "Take as long as you like. I can account for every penny." Several months later, when his books were returned with a grudging apology, he requested—and received—a letter to that effect, which he framed and displayed on his office wall. As he would tell us, quoting an old book he read: "*A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches*" (Prov. 22:1). And it is, of course.

*J. B. Nicholson*

J. B. Nicholson Jr.





# UPLOOK

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### UPLOOK

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# J. Boyd Nicholson

July 14, 1922–November 12, 2000

**I**t is not an easy thing to write a final testimonial to one's own father. He would be embarrassed to hear himself praised when he lived his whole Christian life praising the Lord and encouraging others to do so. But it is a good thing, a right thing, I believe, to give "*honor to whom honor is due.*"

Boyd Nicholson was not only my father; he was my mentor, my confidant, my co-laborer, my example, and my friend. I expected it to be much harder to let him go, but God's matchless grace (which Dad never tired of declaring) has proven again to be true. The Lord Himself promises that His "*grace is sufficient*" for us. He has not short-changed us. Nor can we underestimate the prayers of God's people or the comfort of the Scriptures. "*He faileth not.*"

Dad was a Scot who gave up his homeland for a Canadian bride, a homebody who said thousands of good-byes to travel the world wooing a Bride for the Saviour. He was an old airman who exchanged piloting for helping others navigate through life to the celestial city. And he was an artist who gave up his art career to paint word pictures of Christ and the cross, of heaven and home (see word painting on next page).

He seems to have been one of the last of a breed. He was part of a generation of intrepid men of God who were hallmarked by at least three outstanding characteristics.

*They had a passion for the gospel* that led them to plow and sow and weep and reap in all the wide world's field. They did not flinch when derided on the street corner, or



when they were rejected as they went door to door. They just kept at it, and Dad and his generation saw thousands saved. They never got over the pure, sweet gospel because they never got over being saved themselves. Their attitude of wonder is expressed in the words of one of Dad's close friends, Jack Trotter, who would shake his head after hearing the gospel again and say, "How did we ever get in?" They longed for others to get in, too.

*They had a loyalty to the assembly*, to meeting in the simple way which they believed the Word of God taught. Their loyalty to local church life was directly linked to their loyalty to the Head of the church Himself. Although they knew many fine believers who felt free to bear the names of various denominations, these men believed with all their hearts that only one Man had died for them, and that He deserved

the place of honor. His name alone should be named among His people. When others got miffed and left the assembly in a huff, they wept a while, then wiped their tears away, picked up their tools, and went back to work, repairing the breach in the wall and then going on from there.

*They also had a holy reverence for the things of God.* They walked softly in the Lord's presence. They were awed that they could come week by week into the Holiest of all to remember Him. And they knew what they were doing when they got there. They had a deep respect for the Bible and never spoke lightly from the pulpit. In short, it was no idle thing to call them men of God.

They took the Lord and His work seriously. Many of them (and their wives) sacrificed greatly for Him, but thought little of it. On one occasion, shortly after Dad was called to preach full time (and things were pretty slim financially), he received an offer to take an executive post with Mercedes Benz of Canada. He left the letter lying on his desk and went off to preach at a children's meeting in Simcoe, Ontario. At least one child professed faith in Christ that night. When Dad arrived home, somehow the letter had lost whatever appeal it might have had, compared to the salvation of an eternal soul.

Dad never thought he was anything out of the ordinary, a man with a limited education, an unknown in the world. But he knew that his God could do extraordinary things through ordinary men and he set about, by God's grace, to see Him do it. And I think He did.

# HOME AT LAST: *The Man We Love*

*J. Boyd Nicholson*

The war had ended. I was out in Burma when we got word that we were returning home. We went to Bombay to pick up a ship. There were crowds of men going back, of course, but two hundred of us were assigned to the S.S. Scythia, which was a ship that had been completely refitted as a passenger ship. So this was pretty nice for us to go home on a very beautiful ship!

We didn't realize until we were about a day out to sea that there were nearly two thousand Italian prisoners of war down below. They were being repatriated to Italy. Many of them had not been home for years. Every evening, they would bring their guitars and mandolins and would gather in a section of open deck. There, under the stars, they would sing songs of home. We would go to the rear of our upper deck and listen to them. It was really beautiful.

Each succeeding day at sea we could sense the emotion rising as they drew closer to home. We passed through the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, across the Mediterranean, and then into Naples Bay, with Vesuvius looming in the distance.

We observed the flurry of activity as the ship docked. From our vantage point, we could see that there was a big tent where the military police were. All these men were to be processed and released through that military tent before they could go out to their loved ones. We could see thousands upon thousands waiting behind the iron railing. But there was a little group of people who had been allowed in, maybe thirty-five or so. For some reason, they were on the dock, held back only by a little wooden fence.

And what emotion we saw! We were feel-

ing it ourselves; we too were going home!


One big fellow got to the bottom of the gangplank and started to dance around in circles, crying out, "Liberty, liberty!" He was no longer a prisoner; he was free at last!

Another man fell his full length on the cobble stones and kissed the ground. The place he had been dreaming of these years. Italia! Home, sweet home!

Then I watched as a young fellow descended the gangway. He was a stocky fellow, with two kit bags, one over each shoulder. He got about halfway down the gangplank when there was a shout from one of the men in the little group on the dock, "Antonio!"

The boy looked up. There was a man waving his arms. He dropped his kit bags right there and started to run down the bouncing gangway. The military police tried to stop him and direct him to the tent, but he broke right past them, running for the fence. The fence didn't stop him, either. He took a flying leap right over the heads of the people and got his arms around the neck of that man. From the upper deck we could hear them weep for joy.

What do you imagine he was thinking about right there? Liberty? No longer a prisoner? I don't think so. Italy? The olive groves? The grape vines? The sunshine on the Mediterranean? I don't think so. I think what filled his heart at that moment was the man he loved.

You know, beloved, it's really going to be something, when at last, in a moment, we step on shore, and know we're home. HOME AT LAST! We'll feel at home, among the family of God. It's going to be wonderful, beloved, to be home. And it's going to be wonderful to be free. Free of this failing flesh and this wicked heart. But that's not what will make heaven for us. What will it be? "*They shall see His face,*" and it will be the Man we love! 

*From a tape recorded at Markham Bible Chapel, Friday, January 12, 1996.*

*Transcribed by Doug Price (ON).*



# Wise sayings of old

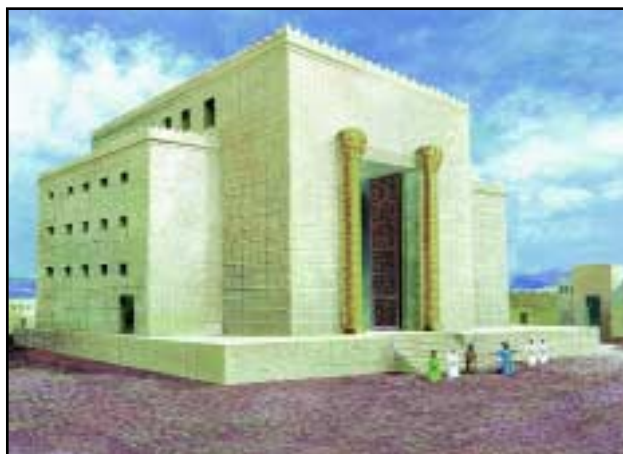
*An introduction to the Book of the Proverbs of Solomon.*

**S**olomon was a great man. He inherited the throne of his father David, king of Israel. The Lord promised to answer his prayer, and was pleased when Solomon asked for wisdom. God gave him a wise and understanding heart, to be the wisest man in all history (1 Ki. 3:12; 4:30-31).

In Solomon's fourth year, he started to build the magnificent temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem. He used 100,000 talents of gold to cover the walls. A talent is about 114 pounds. Today gold is quoted at \$271 per ounce. So each talent was worth about half a million dollars. The temple took seven years to build. Then King Solomon offered a great sacrifice, 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep. We well know the market price of beef or lamb today.

Solomon studied nature and taught his people about trees, plants, animals, birds, insects and fish. He wrote 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit specially guided Solomon in writing, and has preserved it for us in the Scripture. Early in life he wrote the beautiful poem, the Song of Solomon. Later—after much experience—he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes. These books, with Proverbs, are written, like the book of Psalms, in the form of Hebrew poetry. Each verse usually has two lines. The second line may repeat the thought of the first, but in different



words. For example, *"For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck"* (Prov. 1:9). Or it may add to the thought of the first line, as in Proverbs 1:8, 16, 18: *"My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother"* *"For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood."* *"And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives."* Many others start the second line with the word "but", and say just the opposite. For example, *"A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother"* (Prov. 10:1) and *"Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction"* (Prov. 10:14).

Don't think of this book of Proverbs as the wisdom of man, not even the wisest. It is really the inspired Word of God. Christ is the wisdom of God and has become wisdom for us (1 Cor. 1:24, 30).

The book of Proverbs includes some proverbs of other wise men, (22:17; 24:34). Some sayings of

Solomon were copied later by the servants of King Hezekiah (Prov. 25:1). It also contains wise sayings of Agur (ch. 30) and King Lemuel (ch. 31).

The Lord Jesus affirmed that the Scriptures testify of Himself (Jn. 5:39). The book of Proverbs tells us how a perfect man will act, and so it describes the only Perfect Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us take a brief look.

Chapters 5-7 contain strong warnings to both men and women about immorality. But chapter 8 personifies Wisdom as a woman calling to men, and to all descendants of Adam, *"Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man"* (Prov. 8:4). We think of Christ, who usually spoke in a normal voice, but sometimes cried out (Jn. 7:28, 37; 12:44). She wants men to repent, *"Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you"* (Prov. 1:23); so did the Lord (Lk. 13:3, 5).


*"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before his works of old"* (Prov. 8:22). The Lord possessed me in the beginning. Some modern versions change this to "created." This Hebrew word *qanah* is found in Jeremiah 32:15, translated there "possessed." And the noun form is used in Genesis 23:18; 26:14; and 2 Chronicles 32:29. This verse in Proverbs does not teach that the Son was less than eternal (Jn. 1:1). God had all wisdom in all eternity (1 Cor. 2:7).

"I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was" (Prov. 8:23). God's eternal plan was that Christ should reign as King. Other verses used by those who demean Christ are Proverbs 8:24-25. "I was brought forth" (v. 25). This word is used for child-birth, but also for dancing, for joy or anguish (Jud. 21:23; Esther 4:4). We can apply this passage to Christ, without pressing any doctrine contrary to the rest of Scripture.

Then in verses 30 and 31, the Son was always with the Father, in the most intimate relationship. The Son is constantly the Father's delight, and always rejoiced in

His presence. Yet the Son's delights were with men on earth. Certainly men can find in Him eternal life and favor with the Lord (Prov. 8:35).

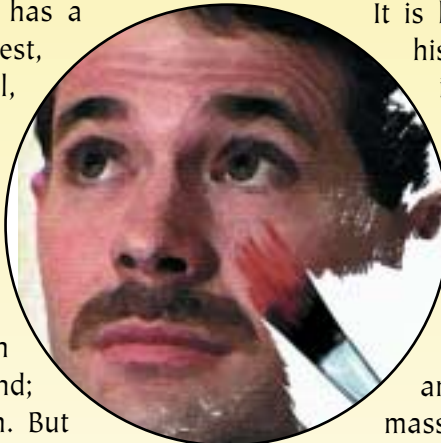
Agur also was led to ask who has ascended into heaven (Prov. 30:4). Who has power in nature? His Name is God and His Son's Name is Jesus Christ.

We should search the Scriptures for every thought of Christ. The Father seeks true worshippers. The Son knocks at the door for fellowship with the believer. The Book of Proverbs can help us learn more of the Lord and His righteous ways. 

## Portrait of the Hebrews as God intended

**T**he book of Proverbs has a deep historical interest, as well as a moral, social, industrial, and pious one. Solomon doubtless did not compose all the proverbs contained in it. Many of them he selected, digested, and arranged. But the mass of the book passed through his hands, or at least his mind; therefore it has his sanction. But there can be little doubt that by far the greater part of the book originated among the Hebrew people as such. They bear the evident stamp of serious thinking and devout minds.

They are obviously a selection, inasmuch as in 1 Kings 4:32 we are told that Solomon "spake three thousand proverbs." If he drew from these in order to compose the book of Proverbs, he must have selected, for the book contains less than one thousand. And the internal evidence discloses that the proverbs of other wise men besides Solomon are contained in it. The store, then, of Hebrew proverbs must have been very great in the time of Solomon.



It is here that we come to see the historical element of the book. It is a picture—a vivid picture—of the internal Hebrew man; of his genius, feelings, practical reasonings, morals, industry, and social conditions. Not that there were no dissenters from many of its maxims; for there were doubtless bad men among them at the time. But the mass of the people must have been of a different character, for how else could they relish and heartily approve of such a manual of ethics, of sobriety, chastity, industry, and economy as this book contains?

In this book, then, is virtually contained the history of their mental and moral state and progress—a history more minute, more graphic, more extensive, and I may add, more interesting than all the external histories of the nation. And all the heathen moralists and proverbialists joined together cannot furnish us with such a book as that of the Proverbs in the sacred Scriptures.

—MOSES STUART, *Commentary on Proverbs*

Announcing a new UPLOOK Ministries Rise Up Conference

## RISE UP & WORK: The Lord is Coming!

Mark your calendars!

December 26-29, 2001

Indianapolis, Indiana

More details to come

### RETREATS AT GREENWOOD HILLS

Greenwood Hills Bible Conference and Camp will host the following retreats this winter: Congress Retreat (singles 16 & up) with speaker Steve Hulshizer on January 5-7; the January Jubilee (singles 12-16) with speaker Bill Merkle on January 19-21; and a Couples' Retreat with speaker Bob Gessner on April 20-22. For more information, visit their website at [www.greenwoodhills.org](http://www.greenwoodhills.org)

### WORD ALIVE WEEKENDS

These are ministry intensive weekends designed for Christians of all ages who want to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ: January 26-28 Joe Mikhael (ON) February 23-25 Joe Reese (ON) Mar. 30-Apr. 1 J. B. Nicholson (MI) Ron Hampton 874 London St., Winnipeg, MB R2K 3P7 (204) 669-6026 or (204) 663-9628 [WordAlive@attcanada.ca](mailto:WordAlive@attcanada.ca)

### SKIING IN THE SMOKIES

Young people (and the young at heart) are invited to the third annual Skiing in the Smokies weekend retreat scheduled January 12-15,

2001 at Camp Living Water in Bryson City, NC. You will appreciate the Bible teaching of speakers Rex Trogdon (NC) and Ken Additon (FL) along with a great time of fellowship. Skiing the mile-high (5400') Cataloochee Ski Area will offer plenty of outdoor adventure, too! Call or write for further information. Camp Living Water 1510 W. Deep Creek Rd. Bryson City, NC 28713 (828) 488-6012 [dclw@juno.com](mailto:dclw@juno.com)

### PARK OF THE PALMS

Park of the Palms is a Christian retirement community and Bible conference center located in Keystone Heights, FL. This winter's series of conferences includes excellent Bible teachers as well as other activities such as missionary projects, gospel outreach, activities and planned outings. Accommodations and meals are available.

The 2001 schedule is as follows:

Jan. 20-26	Bernard Osborne
Jan. 27-Feb. 2	Dr. Jack Fish
Feb. 3-9	Dr. Daniel Smith
Feb. 10-16	Dr. Charles Wagner
Feb. 17-23	Dr. Renald Showers
Feb. 24-Mar. 2	Rex Trogdon
Mar. 3-9	James Comte
Mar. 10-16	Phil Guikema

Park of the Palms  
706 Palms Circle  
Keystone Heights, FL 32656  
(352) 473-4926

### BIBLE STUDIES IN FLORIDA

Recently a Bible study has been started on Thursday evenings in Zephyrhills, FL, with 10-12 attending. Presently there is no assembly in Zephyrhills, but it is the prayer of those in this area that the Lord may use it to form an assembly. If you live in the area or winter here, please join us and encourage this effort. For more information, please contact:

David Dunlap (813) 996-1053  
[d.dunlap@juno.com](mailto:d.dunlap@juno.com)  
Les Crumpler (813) 780-9540

### PROPHECY STUDY TOUR

Randy Amos plans to lead a 10-day prophecy study tour of Israel. There will be an opportunity to extend the trip with a two-day tour of Egypt. The dates will be March 25-April 5, 2001.

Mark Kolchin  
P.O. Box 305  
Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734  
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### TEACH & TESTIFY TEAMS 2001

TnT Teams is a short-term missions opportunity for believers to



evangelize and serve the Lord in the Republic of Ireland. It is an authentic cross-cultural missions exposure that doesn't require having to learn another language to be effective. After orientation and training, the team members are involved in a concentrated program of evangelism and ministering to Irish assemblies and believers. For believers 18 years and older. May 28–June 21, 2001.

Contact Ron Hampton at:

(204) 669-6026 or

(204) 663-9628

### **MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR AT GREENWOOD HILLS**

Due to the retirement of Ned Keller who has faithfully served the Lord at Greenwood Hills Bible Conference and Camps for the past sixteen years, there is a need for a maintenance supervisor. This position requires the ability to direct others and to do the great variety of hands-on maintenance tasks associated with operating a Bible Conference and Camp. This is a year-round occupation. Greenwood Hills is located seventeen miles west of Gettysburg, PA. For more info:

Scott Blair

(717) 352-2150

### **SERVE AT PITTSBORO CHRISTIAN VILLAGE**

Pittsboro Christian Village offers several service opportunities for believers with servant attitudes and a love for the Lord's people. These are paid positions with benefits.

Health Care Administrator: RN, with management and interpersonal skills. Health Care Staff: RNs, LPNs, CNAs. Food Service Staff: Cooks, Assistant cooks, and servers

If you are interested, contact:

Dave Dewhurst

(919) 542-3151

Fax: (919) 542-5919

wdew@juno.com

### **FOOD & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER NEEDED**

Verdugo Pines Bible Camp, a beautiful 220-bed camp/retreat center in Southern California, currently seeks a Food & Environmental Services Manager. Duties would include menu planning, ordering and receiving food shipments, safe food preparation and presentation. Food service experience is required; leadership & organization skills are a must! Opportunities available during the summer to lead in staff morning devotions and evening Bible studies.

This is considered an outreach ministry and requires individuals who are mature in their faith, enjoy serving others, and work well with people. A salary and a three-bedroom home with paid utilities is provided, along with allowances for gasoline and food.

Verdugo Pines Bible Camp

PO Box 1989

Wrightwood, CA. 92397

Verdugopines@snowline.net

### **EMMAUS CORRESPONDENCE— ARABIC BRANCH**

The Emmaus Correspondence prison ministry in St. Louis, MO is excited about a recent development which will allow them to serve the Arabic communities in the United

States. Emmaus Bible Courses have been translated into Arabic and, since May 2000, are being sent to applicants at no cost. Christians can invest in this ministry through prayer and by encouraging Arabic friends to enroll in this correspondence course.

Set Free Ministries

Arabic Branch

PO Box 22006

St. Louis, MO 63126-0006

phil3\_20@juno.com

### **FELLOWSHIP IN NE NORTH CAROLINA**

Believers in NE North Carolina that desire to remember the Lord on a weekly basis, uphold His Word and seek others to come to the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, are encouraged to write to:

Robert Higerd

25 Frank's Creek Drive, AP

Hertford, NC 27944

### **NEW MEETING PLACE IN WEST PALM BEACH, FL**

The meeting place of Grace and Truth Fellowship has changed. They are now meeting in the Media Center of Jupiter Christian School, located at the corner of S. Delaware Blvd. and Mohawk St. in Jupiter, FL. Meeting times on the Lord's Day are Breaking of Bread at 9:30 and



## **EXCEL 2001**

A retreat for young people will be held in the Grand Rapids, MI area January 19-21 with Joe Reese. Plan to start off the new year with a time away for spiritual nourishment and challenge as well as fellowship with brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Caroline Cairns

(616) 235-3349 or (616) 456-9166

E-mail: caroline@uplook.org

Family Bible Hour at 11:00. Call Furman Martin at (561) 746-6995 for the time and place of prayer meetings.

### COMMENDATION

#### Emerson and Miriam Keung

After several months of discussion and prayerful consideration, the saints of Bethel Gospel Chapel in North Bay, ON, enthusiastically commend Emerson and Miriam Keung to the work the Lord has called them to in Papua New Guinea with New Tribes Mission. Their commitment to this particular work is for four years, but as is our policy, the commendation will be reviewed every two years.

We know Miriam and Emerson to be young adults who are committed to the Lord Jesus Christ, with a priority to serve Him. We are confident that they have demonstrated significant gifts for the work on the mission field.

We consider Miriam and Emerson's work to be an extension of our work at Bethel. We commend our brother and sister to the Lord and the work He has called them to. We likewise commend them to the Lord's people everywhere and ask that you remember them as you pray.

#### Tim and Vicki McClelland

The elders at Cheshire Bible Chapel (Cheshire, CT) are happy to commend Tim and Vicki McClelland to full time ministry primarily at West Woods Christian Academy (Hamden, CT). Over the past several years, Tim was commended by other assemblies to work among the prison population and he has ably ministered as a chaplain in the correctional facility in Cheshire.

Since coming into fellowship at Cheshire Bible Chapel, Tim has become one of the elders and he and Vicki have actively served among

the saints and have been a positive influence to the community. They have determined the leading of the Lord to leave the prison ministry in order to invest themselves more fully at the academy. The elders wholeheartedly concur that the Lord has so led and rejoice with them.

They reside with their children Jenelle, Jason, Joshua, and Justin at: 290 Johnson St., Naugatuck, CT 06770.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Bill and Mary Stevenson  
8521 Parrots Landing  
Tampa, FL 33647  
Phone: (813) 558-9831

### NEW CORRESPONDENT

Watson Road Bible Chapel  
45435 Watson Rd.  
Chilliwack, BC V2R 2H5  
(604) 858-7291

### Homecalls

#### Chester Lee Van Dyke

Chester Lee Van Dyke of Gainesville, FL, went to be with the Lord on August 28, 2000 at the age of 81. Born in Augusta, GA, he had lived in Gainesville for the past ten years, moving there from Marietta, GA. He was the former co-owner of Label Tape Print, Inc. He was on the board of directors of Christian Youth Camps, Inc. at Camp Hope for twenty-two years. He was also Regional Director for Emmaus Correspondence School courses.

#### Ray Blais

Ray Blais was born in Rochester, NY forty-nine years ago and went home to be with the Lord on September 22, 2000. He was well-known by many and much loved by his home church and at Camp Li-Lo-Li. He leaves his wife, Becky, who was a true help-mate, two sons and a daughter, all married, and one

granddaughter.

He was saved as a young man soon after his marriage and he immediately set himself to learn everything he could about His Saviour and to serve Him faithfully and diligently.

Ray worked for the Gannett Company for twenty-two years, both in Rochester and in New Jersey, and retired early in order to give his entire time to serving the Lord. In his earliest years as a believer, he was quickly recognized as a promoter who thought "big," a creative planner with a special burden for young people, a tireless "can-do" worker, a diligent learner and teacher, an innovator, a strong supporter of his home assembly and camp work, and an exemplary family man.

Ray served as Sunday School superintendent, children's workshop leader, and developer of community programs involving youth. Probably most important of all was his work at Camp Li-Lo-Li where he served in many capacities and for the past seven years as Administrative Director. This latter position gave him a wide scope for his creative ideas for bringing people together to hear the gospel.

Ray worked hard and effectively and only God knows what he accomplished for eternity. Ray was stricken with lymphoma in 1995 and began the very difficult cancer treatments that weakened him and failed to cure the ever-worsening disease. His ability to endure suffering and carry on was amazing, and he was working at camp the last day of his life. Ray will always be remembered for his enthusiasm, zeal, great ideas, and solid contributions to the spread of the gospel.



# Thomas Liddon Sheridan

*He taught many of us "the figures of the true." Now he's "in heaven itself."*

**O**n October 12, Thomas Liddon Sheridan was called to Glory. He was 82, and had been my husband for 62 years. The previous day, he fell and hit his head, fracturing his skull. This caused internal bleeding into the brain. After a few hours of semi-consciousness, he went into a deep coma and died at 7:30 on Thursday morning.

Liddon was born in Jacksonville, FL. When he was 8 months old, his parents moved to Augusta, GA, where his father pastored a large church. He was saved as a young child, but in his mid-teens he dedicated his life completely to the Lord. At that time he was given a great love for the Word of God which never left him. His mother told me of often finding him asleep with his Bible held tightly to his heart.

When he was a senior at Bible college, studying for the ministry, we met and were married at the end of that school year.

While Liddon was growing up, his father often brought to Augusta well known Bible teachers, such as Harry Ironside and William R. Newell for city-wide conferences. Encouraged by such ministry, he began his life-long practice of in-depth study of the Word of God.

He became increasingly concerned about his church position. Since he had never heard of anyone meeting just in the Lord's Name, he continued studying, praying, and dreaming of a meeting based only on the Word without sectarian boundaries. Finally, in 1941, through the influence of his brother-in-law, Virgil Hollingsworth, Jr., he learned that

such meetings did exist. He wrote:

After years of discussing the will of the Lord for a Christian regarding his church position and wrestling with the decision, and with much prayer, Bro. Hollingsworth and I resigned our denominational connections, and with our wives and one newly saved couple, began breaking bread in his home. This was the birth of what is now Bethany Chapel in Augusta.

After about one year, he went through a time of agonizing prayer and searching before the Lord, largely due to the fact that he saw the deep pain that his departure from that church caused his godly parents and others who could not understand his "new" position. Finally, with real sorrow, he knew he had no choice but to obey what he plainly saw in Scripture. He returned to Bethany Chapel, and was back in what he considered his scriptural church position, never to waver again.

For the next few years he worked at secular jobs, using all available time for prayer and Bible study. A real scholar, knowing Greek, he was only interested in *"what saith the Scriptures."* Soon, he was preaching throughout the south most weekends.

In 1948, we were commended as missionaries to the work in what was then Belgian Congo. We returned in 1955 due to political unrest.

Liddon began an itinerant Bible teaching ministry, and he soon realized that this was God's path for him. He did this for the rest of his life—in the Bahamas, Canada and the US.

In 1983, we returned to

Nyankunde, our old mission station in Africa, and for six months he preached and taught the Word. We spent quite a bit of time in the "bush." The African Christians fed and housed us in their huts. We walked many miles and had the privilege of visiting many villages far from the beaten track. There were many professions of faith.



In the late 1960's, Lawrence Chambers gave Liddon his model of the tabernacle. This richly enhanced his ministry. Several years ago, he turned the model over to Bill Gustafson who uses it in his work.

Liddon spent the last four years ministering locally or in easily accessible meetings. At the time of his death, he was teaching a weekly Bible class in a local engineering firm. He loved that class! Also, he was making radio tapes that were aired weekly in Wrens, GA. He had recently preached a series on "The Glory of the Church and the Churches" locally.

There is a great emptiness in our hearts, but not for one moment would we wish him back. At last he is HOME! *"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."*



# Destined for the throne

*The King has us in training for reigning.*

**S**olomon, the wisest human king, wrote most of the book of Proverbs. To whom was this book given? First to his son, and then to any who would read it and apply its truths. God's purpose for man is first mentioned in Genesis 1:26, *"And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."* He made man to have dominion over all the earth.

But God's intentions didn't stop with man ruling the earth. His ultimate goal for man is to make us *"kings and priests unto God"* (Rev. 1:6). The Scriptures give us a path to follow which takes us through this life into the next, preparing those who follow that path for the day of rule and perfection. Proverbs 4:18 says, *"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."*

Wisdom, the key word in Proverbs, is the core of the following simple outline:

1. Wisdom for young men 1:1–9:18
2. Wisdom for all people 10:1–24:34
3. Wisdom for leaders 25:1–31:31

Proverbs is a portrait of a young man starting out in life. His father, who is a king, desires that one day his son will also become a wise king. This book covers at least ten subjects which the son is to master in this school of wisdom.


Two schools advertise and work hard to enroll this young man into their institution of higher learning.

They are the school of wisdom and the school for fools. Ten of the subjects offered in the school of wisdom are:

1. A Good Name (10:7; 22:1)
2. Youth (13:24; 19:18; 22:6, 15; 23:13-14)
3. Business affairs (6:6-11; 10:4; 11:1)
4. Marriage (5:15, 18; 11:22, 29; 12:4; 14:1; 19:13; 21:9, 19; 31:10)
5. Morality (5:3-5; 6:24-32; 7:4-27)
6. Wisdom (3:13-18; 8:35)
7. Self-control (16:32; 25:28)
8. Temperance (20:1; 23:29-32)
9. Companions (17:17; 18:24; 25:6)
10. The tongue (15:1, 23, 26; 16:24; 17:27; 18:21; 25:11; 26:17, 20)

However a greater than Solomon has come, the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt. 12:42) and He has revealed to us through His Word a higher heavenly position for those who become His

sons by receiving Him. (Jn. 1:12). *"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"* (Eph. 2:6). Our schooling here on earth is the preparation for rulership in the future.

The Holy Spirit teaches us as we study and apply the book of Proverbs how to pass the final exam and what to shun in studying each one of these ten subjects. He wants us to graduate with an "A.U.G." degree. *"Study to show thyself APPROVED UNTO GOD, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness"* (2 Tim. 2:15-16). 



*The Beverly family, presently serving the Lord overseas.*

# Learning the way life is

*Even the structure of the book of Proverbs has a lesson for us.*

**W**hy are young people drawn to the book of the Proverbs? We thought they didn't want to be lectured, to be preached at. Still, Proverbs is a young man's favorite. Why? Because it is so genuine, so honest, so straightforward, so up front. Here we learn the way life is.

The very tone of the book is a square deal in a world of lies, masks and facades. Notice that not only is the tone of the book of Proverbs true to life, so is the structure.

Why do we struggle with the outline of the book of Proverbs? Educators tell us some people primarily learn in a sequential way, while others learn in a random manner.

In the first nine chapters you see proverbs strung together in a plot. Each chapter develops its characters and moves together to make a point. This is also the style of chapters 25, 30, and 31. Sometimes in life we have the luxury of learning big areas of God's truth all at one time, and this is the way we should begin learning—line upon line.

But in most of the book, (ch. 10–24, ch. 26–29) the proverbs seem to be laid out in a random manner. One proverb may nestle in against other seemingly unrelated proverb. Isn't this how we learn in most of life? We learn "here a little and there a little."

So is there a lesson in the structure of the book? Certainly. At the outset we are instructed very similarly to the way a teacher would lecture a classroom of students, "This semester we will focus our class time on the study of Shunning Evil



Counsel." And so for thirty-three successive lessons one great theme is insisted on. Next semester, the topic will be Learning to Value Wisdom in twenty-two lessons. So go the first nine chapters.

But even the professional student knows that all of life is not like a classroom lecture. We also learn in the mix of life. I am confronted with random lessons on sloth, and finance, and cranky neighbors, and bad attitudes all at the same time. And so most of the book of Proverbs is written in just that way. All that I will ever need to know on anything does not come to me in a one semester series.

One strong point of the Proverbs is repetition. We tell teachers that repetition is reinforcement. Some things bear repeating. Matthew,

Mark and Luke repeat many of the same sayings and events of our Lord's life. But in each case there is a differing emphasis. So, too, in the Proverbs. There is repetition, but in different settings. We say that some of the hardest lessons in life to learn are the ones we thought we already knew. The Lord brings us into a new situation to learn an old lesson. Also note the development of thought in the way a saying is restated or added to, as it is repeated in the progress of the book.

Another strength of some of these proverbs is the charm and surprise of the obvious. We read a proverb and may think, "But of course! That is so obvious." These proverbs commend themselves to our conscience because of their obvious good sense. The right response to the teaching of

the Holy Spirit is to say, “Yes, this is obviously true.”

Sin by its very nature is irrational, and when we return to God we are also returning to sanity and what God intends to be “common sense.” We have heard the query, “Why do we call it ‘common sense,’ when so few have it?” Few have it when few know God’s ways.

We grant that there are layers of meaning in the proverbs. When I say that the truth of the Proverbs is often obvious, I do not mean that there cannot also be deep, hidden, underlying thoughts. Certainly we may discover both. On the surface, we see an immediate

obvious lesson, that shows us where the vein of gold begins. In this way there is something for all of us.

But the proverbs are called “dark sayings.” There is a depth here that challenges the treasure hunter. “*Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out*” (Prov. 20:5, NKJV).

Solomon has laid out these proverbs like a skilled chef who takes common ingredients and sets them alongside one another in surprising and sometimes startling ways. The arrangement keeps our palate fresh and wanting more.



## WHAT YOU THINK

*As he (a man) thinks in his heart, so is he.*

PROVERBS 23:7

A. P. Gibbs used to say, “You are not what you think you are, but what you think—you are.” This means that the mind is the spring from which behavior flows. Control the source and you control the stream that flows from it. Therefore control of the thought-life is basic. That is why Solomon said, “*Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life*” (Prov. 4:23). Here the heart is used as a synonym for the mind.

James reminds us that sin begins in the mind (Jas. 1:13-15). If we think about a thing long enough, eventually we’ll do it.

Sow a thought and reap an act. Sow an act and reap a habit.

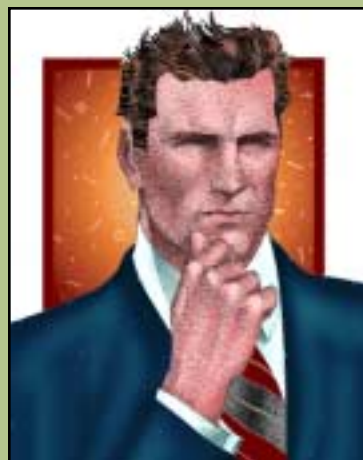
Sow a habit and reap a character. Sow a character and reap a destiny.

The Lord Jesus emphasized the importance of the thought life by equating hatred with murder (Mt. 5:21-22) and by equating the lustful look with adultery (Mt. 5:28). He also taught that it’s not what a man eats that defiles him but what he thinks (Mk. 7:14-23).

We are responsible for what we think because we have the power to control it. We can think about lewd, suggestive things or we can think about what is pure and Christlike. Each one of us is like a king. The empire that we rule over is our thought life. That empire has tremendous potential for good and enormous potential for evil. We are the ones who determine which it will be.

Here are some positive suggestions as to what we can do. First, take the whole matter to the Lord in prayer, saying, “*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me*” (Ps. 51:10). Second, judge every thought by how it appears in the presence of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). Third, confess every evil thought instantly and expel it (Prov. 28:13). Next, avoid having a blank, empty mind. Fill it with positive, worthy thoughts (Phil. 4:8). Fifth, exercise discipline over what you read, see, and hear. You cannot expect a pure thought life if you feed on filth and pollution. Finally, keep busy for the Lord. It’s when you shift your mind into neutral that vile fantasies seek admission.

—William MacDonald, *One Day at a Time*, p.103





# Recapturing the vision

*An update on the National Workers' and Elders' Conference.*

“**W**hat a blessing!” This was the predominant commentary on the recently concluded 2000 National Workers’ and Elders’ Conference (Lawrence, KS). The theme focused on “A Vision for Growth” and the ministry brought needful topics into focus.

Brother Mike Attwood (GA), who was a substitute for the absent Boyd Nicholson (ON), brought exhortation from Psalm 1. The first day we were exhorted not only to be separate from the world, but separated also to God. On the following two days, he directed our attention to beautiful portraits of our Lord from Psalms 2 and 22. We considered how it could be that He would be made a worm, being treated by God as if He were the sinner? This type of ministry prepared our hearts for further discussions throughout the day.

The schedule commenced with “A Vision for Evangelism,” when Wade LeBlanc (NB) stimulated us with his passion for spreading the gospel. Floyd Pierce (IN) encouraged us to pursue the discipling of new believers.

We ended the first day with a presentation of “A Vision for Priesthood,” by Dr. Ken Daughters (IA). Careful but needful demarcation was made concerning the practice of priesthood and the exercise of the speaking gifts.

The second day opened with prayer and Bible study, again led by Mike Attwood. The audience was then motivated to consider insightful practices for developing unity (by David Dunlap, FL) and leadership in the assembly (by Jack Spender, CT).

This prepared the ground for a discussion of practical applications of New Testament assembly principles (by Colin Anderson, ON). However, we were encouraged to not forget impediments to progress, for example with George Farber’s (IA) presentation, “A Vision for Healing Division.”

On the final day, Bob Brown (LA) substituted for Bob Johnston (MI) on the topic, “A Vision for Healing the Broken-Hearted.”


Our seminar sessions proved equally helpful with a discussion format and beneficial subjects such as: pre-marital counseling, working with society’s rebels, counseling family problems, helping single parent families, and assembly responsibilities in sending out new workers and toward current workers. Each theme was pertinent to issues facing today’s assemblies.

It is always encouraging to hear reports of the Lord’s work in North America. Corporate and small group



Photograph by Andrew Nelson

prayer provided a unique bond with one another, and the times of fellowship in the Lord was precious. The Lord gives direction for questions and answers to problems not only through messages or seminars, but also through times of personal discussion.

The assembly in Morgantown, West Virginia, is making arrangements to host next year’s event during October 9-11, 2001. Your heart may find there the encouragement so often needed on the front lines of spiritual battle. All involved in the work of the local assembly—whether an elder or not, young or old, full or part-time worker—should consider attending. 

## ***Ontario Workers' and Elders' Conference May 9-11, 2001***

The theme of the 2001 Ontario Workers’ and Elders’ conference is: *Shepherds of God’s Flock*, with a burden for the local assembly and its role in bringing glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bernard Osbourne from Great Britain has been invited to bring devotional Bible studies, and the other plenary sessions will be taken by Art Auld (OH), Brian Gunning (ON), and Ernie Sarlo (ON). A number of seminars will be offered to deal with related subjects.

The conference will be held, in the will of the Lord, at Oakwood Bible Chapel in Windsor, Ontario. Plan now to attend.

# T H E P R O V E R B S

PEARLS OF SUCCINCT TRUTH FOR DAILY LIVING STRUNG TOGETHER WITH THE GOLDEN CHAIN OF DIVINE WISDOM

"The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; to know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding" (Prov. 1:1-2).

## BOOK ONE: "The proverbs of Solomon" (1:1)

### Introduction: 10 Key Words (1:1-6)

1. *Wisdom* (v. 2): skillfulness, from word for "practiced," the ability to use knowledge aright. Used 37 times in the book of Proverbs.
2. *Instruction* (v. 2): to teach by discipline; used 26 times in Proverbs; sometimes rendered "chastening" (3:11) or "chasteneth" (13:24).
3. *Understanding* (v. 2): or "intelligence" as in the RV. Discernment; consideration to understand the things that differ.
4. *Apprehension* (v. 3): "wisdom" in AV. Has the force of "beware." Learning through unhappy experiences, either of myself or of others.
5. *Righteousness* (v. 3): or "justice" as in AV. Refers to our conduct; might well be rendered "right behavior."
6. *Judgment* (v. 3): equivalent to "decisions." Learning to act with propriety because of the ability to draw a sound conclusion.
7. *Equity* (v. 3): refers to principles rather than conduct; uprightness, moral integrity.
8. *Prudence* (v. 4): "subtily" in the AV. Craftiness, but here it conveys the ability to detect it in others.
9. *Knowledge* (v. 4): information that is sound and sensible. The true way to view a thing, as God does.
10. *Discretion* (v. 4): thoughtfulness through reflection on a matter.

—with help from H. A. Ironside

### "The Words of the Wise" (1:6) (1:7-9:18)

Fifteen poetic clusters & two monologues:

1. *Cluster 1* (1:7-19): The danger of enticement to evil on every hand. MONOLOGUE 1 (1:20-33): Wisdom shouts her warnings in the city.
2. *Cluster 2* (2:1-22): Wisdom is the deliverer from these temptations.
3. *Cluster 3* (3:1-10): Wise and careful living brings its own rewards.
4. *Cluster 4* (3:11-20): Through chastening gain wisdom, the true wealth.
5. *Cluster 5* (3:21-26): The relationship between wisdom and security.
6. *Cluster 6* (3:27-35): How wisdom deals with the perversity of sinners.
7. *Cluster 7* (4:1-9): Wisdom, the principal thing, should be taught at home.
8. *Cluster 8* (4:10-19): Two paths diverge; take the right path of the just.
9. *Cluster 9* (4:20-27): The wise life tends to health in body and soul.
10. *Cluster 10* (5:1-23): The danger of entrapment by the alluring ones.
11. *Cluster 11* (6:1-5): The high cost of being surety for a friend.
12. *Cluster 12* (6:6-11): The danger of laziness and an example of industry.
13. *Cluster 13* (6:12-19): Seven things that God hates; esp. discord sowers.
14. *Cluster 14* (6:20-35): The command of God the antidote to adultery.
15. *A Cluster Quartet* (7:1-27): The houses of wisdom and of folly. MONOLOGUE 2 (8:1-36): Wisdom cries again to warn the city of dangers.

—with help from J. Sidlow Baxter

## BOOK TWO: "The proverbs of Solomon" (10:1)

### More "Words of the Wise" (22:17) (10:1-24:34)

PART ONE: 375 proverbs in the form of couplets of which there are three basic kinds (10:1-22:16):

- **CONTRASTIVE**, in which the second line gives an opposing view to the first line—for example:  
*A merry heart doeth good like a medicine;  
But a broken spirit drieth the bones.*
- **COMPLETIVE**, in which the second line adds a concluding thought to the first line—for example:  
*Commit thy works unto the Lord;  
And thy thoughts shall be established.*
- **COMPARATIVE**, in which the second line places something to be evaluated beside something else. It is often marked out by the second line beginning with "than"—for example:  
*Better is little with righteousness,  
Than great revenues without right* (15:16).

PART TWO: 15 epigrams—a concise poem, pointed and often satirical; perhaps paradoxical or ending with an ingenious turn of thought (22:17-24:34). Often divided from what went before by a "hear" or a "my son" statement:

1. *INTRODUCTION* (22:17-21): "excellent things" (v. 20).
2. Various subjects (22:22-29): an epigram sampling.
3. Control of our appetites (23:1-8): food and riches.
4. Various subjects (23:9-18): "speak not..."; "remove not..."; "withhold not..."; "let not..."
5. Control of our appetites (23:19-21): gluttony.
6. Parents of wise children rejoice (23:22-25).
7. The griefs of whoredom, wine, woe (23:26-35).
8. Various subjects (24:1-9): good & evil; wise & fools.
9. Three "if thou" statements (24:10-12).
10. The sweet reward of finding wisdom (24:13-14).
11. Just men and the ruin of evil men (24:15-20).
12. The son warned of unstable souls (24:21-22).
13. Do all things without partiality (24:23-25).
14. True neighborliness (24:26-29).
15. The field of the slothful man (24:30-34).

## BOOK THREE: "These are also proverbs of Solomon" (25:1)

### Compiled by "the men of Hezekiah" (25:1-29:27)

1. An epigram for the king (25:2-7).
2. Various proverbs, many to do with neighborly relations (25:8-26:2).
3. Portrait: a fool (26:3-12).
4. Portrait: a sluggard (26:13-16).
5. Social pests (26:17-26).
6. Various proverbs, many re. the use of the tongue (26:27-27:4).
7. Some secrets of a healthy friendship (27:5-10).
8. Various proverbs, many re. interpersonal relations (27:11-22).
9. Portrait: a good farmer (27:23-27).
10. 55 proverbs (or aphorisms) in the form of contrastive, completive or comparative couplets (chs. 28-29).

### Some Figures of Speech:

1. **ELLIPSIS**: Leaving something out that can be, and should be, inferred: "It is as sport to a fool to do mischief; but [to exercise] wisdom [is as sport] to a man of understanding" (Prov. 10:23). It is second nature; they naturally respond that way.
2. **ACROSTIC**, one of 13 in the Bible (called *Abecedarian* when following the alphabet): Prov. 31:10-31 with 22 verses of two lines each begins with the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
3. **METONYMY**: where one noun is used in the place of another: e.g.: "A soft tongue [gentle speech] breaketh the bone [overcomes obstinacy]" (Prov. 25:15). Often used in Proverbs (see 5:10; 8:24; 18:8; 27:7).

### The Words of Agur & Lemuel (30:1-31:31)

- A. AGUR'S CONFESSION (30:1-3).
- B. AGUR'S SETS OF NUMBERS:
  1. *Six questions* about God (v. 4) and #6 the most startling of all.
  2. *Two facts* concerning God's Word (vv. 5-6) and the right response.
  3. *Two things* Agur asked of God (vv. 7-9) and the reasons for them.
  4. *A lone proverb* that anticipates Paul's words in Rom. 14:4 (v. 10).
  5. *Four characteristics* of a godless generation (vv. 11-14).
  6. *Four things* like a horseleach that are never satisfied (vv. 15-16).
  7. *A lone proverb* (v. 17) warning youth to honor parents (Eph. 6:1).
  8. *Four things* too wonderful for Agur (vv. 18-19).
  9. *A lone proverb* (v. 20) warning about the ruthlessness of sin.
  10. *Four things* the earth cannot bear (vv. 21-23).
  11. *Four little but wise creatures* on the earth (vv. 24-28).
  12. *Four things* that are beautiful to watch in action (vv. 29-31).
  13. *Two final proverbs* (vv. 32-33).
- C. LESSONS FOR LEMUEL (31:1-9)
- D. LEMUEL'S PORTRAIT OF A VIRTUOUS WOMAN (vv. 10-31) in acrostic form:
  1. Note what she does (vv. 12-22, 24-27, 29).
  2. Note what her husband and children do (vv. 11, 23, 28).
  3. Obvious conclusions (vv. 30-31).

The reason for the Proverbs: "God would save all who heed what is there recorded from the heart-breaking experiences...of the man who was chosen to write them" (H. A. IRONSIDE).

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This issue of **UPLOOK** magazine included the chart shown above in a double-page format. This full-color printed chart as well as the various topics listed below are available from Uplook Ministries by calling toll-free 1-800-952-2382 (new charts are added periodically). The wealth of information in these charts is perfect for Bible studies, intermediate and advanced Sunday school classes and for reference. Printed on quality paper and shipped in durable mailers.

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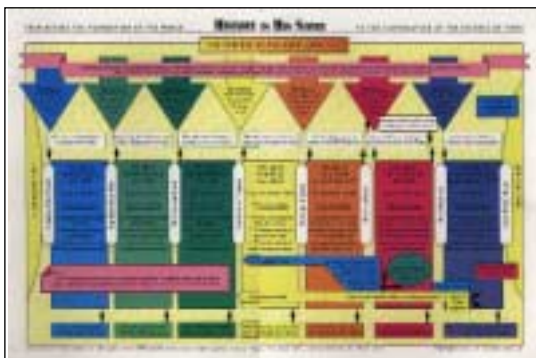
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# GET WISDOM

*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.*

*Proverbs 4:7*

A poor, uneducated woman, after being interviewed by a minister as to her Christian knowledge and fitness for partaking of the Lord's Supper, was told she must first study the doctrines of the Catechism for three months and then she would be more fit to attend.

"Oh, sir," she cried, "I know I cannot understand and explain all of the doctrines like some of those you have admitted, but, sir, I feel I love Christ so much that I could die for Him!" On the ground of her true devoted love, she at once received admission to the Lord's Supper.

**The Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.**  
**Proverbs 2:6**

*I want a godly fear,  
A quick, discerning eye,  
That looks to Thee when sin is near,  
And sees the tempter fly:  
A spirit still prepared,  
And armed with jealous care;  
Forever standing on its guard,  
And watching unto prayer.*



**Wisdom is knowing what to do next; skill is knowing how to do it; virtue is doing it.**

Cicero tells the story in his treatise, "On Old Age" when one day an aged Athenian came into the theater, but not one of his fellow-citizens in that immense crowd would inconvenience himself to make space for him to be seated.

When the old man approached the ambassadors from Lacedamon, who had their own special seats, they all rose to receive him into their midst. The whole assembly burst into applause. Whereupon somebody said, "The Athenians know what is good but they will not practice it."

Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom. —C. H. SPURGEON

*Happy the man who finds the grace,  
The blessing of God's chosen race,  
The wisdom coming from above,  
The faith that sweetly works by love.*

*Happy beyond description, he  
Who knows "The Saviour died for me!"  
The gift unspeakable obtains,  
And heavenly understanding gains.*

*Wisdom divine! Who tells the price  
Of wisdom's costly merchandise?  
Wisdom to silver we prefer,  
And gold is dross compared to her.*

*Her hands are filled with length of days,  
True riches, and immortal praise—  
Riches of Christ on all bestowed,  
And honor that descends from God.*

*To purest joys she all invites—  
Chaste, holy, spiritual delights;  
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,  
And all her flowery paths are peace.*

*Happy the man who wisdom gains;  
Thrice happy, who his guest retains:  
He owns, and shall forever own,  
Wisdom, and Christ, and heaven are one.*

**How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!**  
**Proverbs 16:16**

# The root of knowledge

*What sweet fruit grows from this noble plant!*

**“T**he fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Prov. 1:7)

The royal preacher begins his sermon at the beginning. He intends to discourse largely on knowledge and wisdom in all their aspects, and he lays his foundation deep in *“the fear of the Lord.”* This brief announcement contains the germ of a far-reaching philosophy. Already it marks the book as divine. The heathen of those days possessed no such doctrines. Solomon had access to a Teacher unknown in their schools.

*“The fear of the Lord”* is an expression of frequent occurrence throughout the Scriptures. It has various shades of meaning, marked by the circumstances in which it is found; but in the main it implies a right state of heart toward God, as opposed to the alienation of an unconverted man.

Though the word is *“fear,”* it does not exclude a filial confidence and a conscious peace. There may be such love as shall cast all slavish fear, and yet leave full bodied in a human heart the reverential awe which creatures owe to the Highest One.

*“There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.”* *“Oh, fear the Lord, ye His saints; for there is no want to them that fear Him!”*

What God is inspires awe; what God has done for His people commands affection. See here the centrifugal and centripetal forces of the moral world, holding the creature reverently distant from the Creator, yet compassing the child about with

everlasting love, to keep him near his Father in heaven. The whole of this complicated and reciprocal relation is often indicated in Scripture by the brief expression *“The fear of God.”*

“Knowledge” and “wisdom” are not distinguished here; at least they are not contrasted. Both terms may be employed to designate the same thing; but when they are placed in antithesis, wisdom is the nobler of the two. Knowledge may be possessed in large measure by one who is destitute of wisdom, and who consequently does no good by his attainments, either to himself or his neighbors. Their correlation is embodied in a proverb of this book (15:2). *“The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright.”* The two terms taken together indicate, in this text, The best knowledge wisely used for the highest ends.

What is the relation which subsists between the fear of the Lord and true wisdom? The one is the foundation, the other the imposed superstructure; the one is the sustaining root, the other the sustained branches; the one is the living fountain, the other the issuing stream.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: the meaning is, he who does not reverentially trust in God, knows nothing yet as he ought to know. His knowledge is partial and distorted. Whatever acquisitions in science he may attain, if his heart departs from the living God, he remains an ignorant man. He who in his heart says *“No God,”* is a fool, however wise he may be in the estimation of the world, and his own.

But how does this judgment accord with facts? Have not some atheists, or at least agnostics, reached the very highest attainments in various departments of knowledge? It is true that some men, who remain willingly ignorant of God, who even blaspheme His name and despise His Word, have learned many languages, have acquired skill in the theory and application of mathematics, have stored their memories with the facts of history, and



the maxims of politics. This is true, and these branches of knowledge are not less precious because they are possessed by men whose whole life turns round on the pivot of one central and all-pervading error. But after this concession, our position remains intact. These men possess some fragments of the superstructure of knowledge but they have not the foundation; they possess some of the branches, but they have missed the root.

The knowledge of God—His character and plans, His hatred of

sin, His law of holiness, His way of mercy—is more excellent than all an unbelieving philosopher has attained. If a Christian has reached it, then a Christian peasant is wiser than the wisest who know not God. It is a knowledge more deeply laid, more difficult to attain, more fruitful, and more comprehensive, than all that philosophers know.

What right has an unbelieving astronomer to despise a Christian laborer as an ignorant man? Let them be compared as to the point in question, the possession of knowledge. Each is ignorant of the other's peculiar department, but it is an error to suppose the astronomer's department the higher of the two. The Christian knows God; the astronomer knows certain of His material works. The Christian knows moral laws, the astronomer physical laws. The subjects of the Christian's knowledge are as real as the heavenly bodies. The knowledge is as difficult, and perhaps, in its higher degrees, more rare. It reaches further, it lasts longer, it produces greater results.

The astronomer knows the planet's path; but if that planet should burst its bonds, and wander into darkness, his knowledge will not avail to cast a line around the prodigal and lead him home. He can mark the degrees of divergence, and predict the period of total loss, but after that he has no more that he can do. The Christian's knowledge, after it has detected the time, manner, and extent of the fallen spirit's aberration, avails further to lay a new bond unseen around him, soft, yet strong, which will compel him to come in again to his Father's house and his Father's bosom. The man who knows that, *"as sin hath reigned unto death, even so grace reigns through righteousness unto*


*eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord,"* possesses a deeper, more glorious, and more potential knowledge than the man who calculates the courses of the planets and predicts the period of the comet's return.

Men speak of the stupendous effects which knowledge in the area of mechanics has produced in the world, and its economy. But the permanence of these acquisitions depends on the authority of moral laws in the consciences of men. If moral restraints are removed, society reverts to a savage state. Inventions in art, though once attained, are again lost. So *"the fear of the Lord"* is a fundamental necessity on which high societal attainments—even material prosperity—absolutely depend. True knowledge in the spiritual department, as to the authority, sanction, and rule of morality, is a greater thing than true knowledge in the material department, for the moral encircles and controls the economic in the affairs of men.

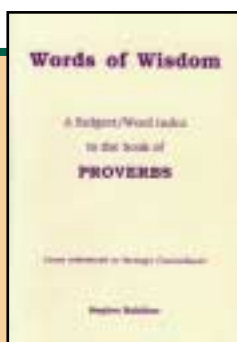
The man whose knowledge begins and ends with matter and its laws has a superstructure without a foundation. In such learning the enduring relations of man as an immortal have no place, and the fabric topples over when the breath of life goes out. But this beginning of knowledge, resting on the being and attributes of God, is a foundation that cannot be shaken. On that solid base more and more knowledge will be reared, high as heaven, wide as the universe, lasting as eternity.

The knowledge of God is the root of all knowledge. When branches are pruned from a tree and laid on the ground in the fall, they retain for a time a portion of their sap. I have seen such branches, when the spring came round, pushing forth buds like their neighbors. But very soon the slender stock of sap was exhausted,

and as there was no connection with a root so as to procure a new supply, the buds withered away. How unlike the buds that spring from the branches growing in the living root!

This natural life is like a severed branch. The knowledge that springs from it is a bud put forth by the life residing in itself. When life passes, it withers away. When a human soul is, by regeneration, *"rooted in Him,"* transplanted into a more genial clime, that knowledge will flourish forever. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, into what it will grow. 

Excerpted from *Laws from Heaven for Life on Earth* by William Arnot



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## Words of Wisdom

### A Subject/Word Index to the Book of Proverbs

Steve Hulshizer has compiled a useful resource for those who wish to do a topical study of Proverbs. His 45-page booklet provides nearly 3,000 references to 336 key words. Where possible, the key word is cross-referenced with *Strong's Concordance* for those who care to look up the Hebrew word and its definition.



# Christ: the wisdom of God

*Is Proverbs 8 a pre-portrait of the Lord Jesus?*

**T**he Lord Jesus on several occasions told both His disciples and His enemies that He was the primary subject matter of the Old Testament (Jn. 5:39, 46; Lk. 24:27, 44). Therefore, as we approach the Old Testament Scriptures, we need to be looking for the Lord Jesus in both prophecy and picture (type). Sadly, much modern scholarship seems to have overlooked this principal.

Recently, while studying Proverbs 8, I was disappointed to see in two recent conservative evangelical commentaries, a denial that this passage speaks of the Lord Jesus.

All the older evangelical commentaries affirm this. For example, A. M. Hodgkin writes, "We cannot doubt that the wisdom of Proverbs is identical with the incarnate Word of the New Testament."

Christ is in all the Scriptures. When studying the Word, we must constantly remind ourselves that the Divine author of the book, the Spirit of God, loves to magnify the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:21; Jn. 15:26).

Proverbs 8 is clearly Wisdom personified, but of whom does it speak? In 1 Corinthians 1:24 we read of "Christ, the wisdom of God." Again in Colossians 2:3, speaking of our Lord Jesus, we read "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." As we look briefly at Proverbs 8, let "looking unto Jesus" be our principle of interpretation.

Before we look at the evidence that this speaks of the Lord Jesus, there is a minor difficulty to overcome and that is that Wisdom personified in Proverbs 8 is spoken of

in the feminine. For example, "*She standeth in the top of the high places*" (v. 2). How are we to deal with this? The Hebrew language has only two genders, masculine and feminine, so grammatically speaking there are no "its" in the language. As a rule, concepts such as righteousness, wickedness, love, truth and law are feminine. Wisdom fits into that category and appears as "she" in this chapter.

## WISDOM'S CRY (vv. 1-5)

In Proverbs 7, we read of the harlot going out into the streets to seduce a young man. Here in chapter 8, Wisdom is also gone out into the highways and byways, calling to the simple and the fool alike. We have contradictory messages in the public arena and both are vying for the affections of men.

In John 7:37, we find Christ, the wisdom of God, calling to the sons of men, "*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink!*"

Today, the public arena is still the scene of competing voices. Men must make a choice. And as we shall see, there are far-reaching consequences to the choice which he makes. Let us not forget our responsibility to confront men in the streets and public places with their great need to choose Christ! Evil seeks daily to entice them and the stakes are high.

## WISDOM'S SPEECH (vv. 6-9)

Again in contrast to the deceitful words of the harlot, Wisdom personified speaks excellent things, right things, the truth that wickedness is

an abomination to his lips. Surely this speaks of the One whose enemies had to conclude, "*Never man spake like this Man*" (Jn. 7:46). His disciples, too, declared that there was something wonderful about His words. Statements like: "*Thou hast the words of eternal life*" and "*neither was guile found in His mouth*" and "*did not our heart burn within us as He talked with us by the way*" indicate that "*all the words of His mouth are in righteousness.*" Do we love to listen to His voice? Are we availing ourselves daily of the vast treasury of His words found in holy Scripture?

## WISDOM'S REWARD (vv. 10-21)

You are in the public places. You hear Wisdom's speech and you respond to what you hear. What then? The clear implication is that you will never regret responding to the wonderful words of Wisdom personified and embracing Him. Great rewards accompany Wisdom. Contrasted with the items that are given great value in the world, we read that Wisdom is better than rubies (v. 11) and better than gold (v. 19). It is important to pay attention to the personal pronouns used in this section, I, me and my being particularly dominant.

The greatest reward is that Wisdom is a Person. "*I love them that love me; and those who seek me early will find me*" (v. 17). Getting to know this wonderful Person is a reward in and of itself (Jn. 17:3), especially knowing that such a wonderful person actually loves us!

Other rewards include such things

as good counsel, sound judgment, leadership ability and moral strength to do what is right. In a world of confusion, these rewards bring stability and strength to those that embrace Wisdom.

WISDOM AND THE CREATION (vv. 22–31)

In this passage, we see clearly the eternal Son of God in what Gaebelien calls “a great prelude to the incarnation.” Here Wisdom is represented as dwelling with God from all eternity. God, whom Scripture calls “*the only wise God*” (1 Tim. 1:17), never existed without the quality or attribute of Wisdom.

“*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God*” (Jn. 1:1). What was their relationship like? Wisdom tells us: “*I was daily His delight.*” Who can read this without being reminded of Luke 3:22 where the Father breaks the silence of heaven and expresses once more His delight in the Son of His love? “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*” or “*in whom is all My delight.*”

As well as being the delight of the Father, He was also co-creator. The NIV renders Proverbs 8:30, “*I was the craftsman at His side.*” Again our minds go back to John 1:3, “*All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made.*”

Perhaps the most staggering statement in this amazing passage is found in verse 31: “*My delights were*

*with the sons of men.*” His delight was so great, that it caused Him to lay aside His glory and leave His eternal dwelling place to become a Man and redeem man by His death on the cross. Such was His delight in the sons of men!

WISDOM AND THE CONSEQUENCES (vv. 32–36)

As the world is confronted in the highways and byways by Wisdom personified or Christ, the Wisdom of God, there are eternal consequences to the choice each individual makes concerning Him. Proverbs 8:35 says, “*Whoso findeth me findeth life*” or as the Apostle John later would put it, “*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.*”

In contrast verse 36 says, “*He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.*” Again let us allow John the apostle to clarify that statement: “*He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*”

For those of us that have responded to Wisdom’s cry and delight in His Words, the future looks bright. Sadly for many in our world, the future is bleak. Should we not then renew our efforts to take the message of Christ back to the public places? The harlots and purveyors of evil never seem to rest in their onslaught to capture the hearts of men with their deadly message. Is it not time to rise up and work?



## WISDOM *in* OUR THOUGHTS

from *The Book of Proverbs* by R. F. Horton, pp. 10–11

Broadly speaking, the wisdom of the Hebrews covers the whole domain of what we should call science and philosophy. It is the consistent effort of the human mind to know, to understand, and to explain all that exists. It is, to use the modern phrase, the search for truth. The “wise men” were not, like Moses and the prophets, inspired legislators and heralds of God’s immediate messages to mankind in seeking to interpret them. But rather...they brought all their faculties to bear in observing life.

By wisdom is meant not merely the search, but also the discovery; not merely a desire to know, but also a certain body of conceptions ascertained and sufficiently formulated. To the Hebrew mind it would have seemed meaningless to assert that agnosticism was wisdom. It was saved from this paradoxical conclusion by its

firmly rooted faith in God. Mystery might hang over the details, but one thing was plain: the whole universe was an intelligent plan of God. The mind might be baffled in understanding His ways, but that all existence is of His choosing and His ordering was taken as the axiom with which all thought must start.

Thus there is a unity in the Hebrew wisdom; unity found in the thought of the Creator. All the facts of the physical world, all the problems of human life, are referred to His mind. Objective wisdom is God’s Being, which includes in its circle everything; and subjective wisdom, wisdom in the human mind, consists in becoming acquainted with this Being and all that is contained in it, meanwhile constantly admitting that He is, and yielding to Him the rightful place in our thoughts.

## WHAT'S GOING ON?

### **GOD at WORK in the PERSIAN GULF**

Without mentioning specifics, a recent trip to the Persian Gulf region confirmed that the Lord is doing a fair bit better job of getting the Word out than we sometimes give Him credit for. Assemblies of believers are meeting in every country in the region, albeit with varying degrees of restriction. Bibles are being distributed in creative ways, and souls are regularly confessing Christ. Pray for the Persian Gulf today.

### **UNREST IN ISRAEL LEADS TO WITNESSING OPPORTUNITIES**

Lack of peace in Israel is affecting ministry to the Jewish people around the world. Friends of Israel's Tim Munger says they've had increasing chances to share the gospel since the violence erupted. "People are wanting to know, what does this mean? And so, we see literally before our eyes open doors of witness both to Jewish people and to inquiring unsaved Gentiles." Munger is encouraging people around the world to pray for the Middle East. He says much of the conflict is centered on man. He says that needs to change. "We're praying, God do Your will in the land of Israel. We're asking that God would bring these people to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to be praying for the leaders. We need to pray that they would turn their eyes from their own resources to the living God."

### **NEW MERCY SHIP**

Operation Mobilization Ships has another ministry ship—the Africa Mercy. The 16,071-ton Danish ferry is being converted into the world's largest private hospital ship. It will provide five surgery suites and an 80-bed surgical ward. The Africa Mercy will have a maximum crew/staff cohort of 450. Besides surgical procedures, the vessel will bring health, dental, construction, and other ministries to ports of call.

### **HOME ALONE?**

Of the 3.7 million American mothers with babies, 59% of them participated in the workforce in 1998, according to a Census Bureau report. In 1976, just 31% of mothers with children under age 1 participated in the labor force, either working full-time, part-time or were actively seeking employment. —Daywatch

### **BAKHT SINGH CALLED HOME**

Bakht Singh was born in 1903 to Hindu parents in Punjab (now part of Pakistan). He was raised as a Sikh. After graduating from Punjab University, he went to England as a student of Agricultural Engineering. Bakht Singh miraculously accepted Christ in 1929 while in the West. In 1933, following his studies, he returned to Colonial India with a clear call from God to be a witness for Christ among his own people in India.



Bakht Singh was the spiritual father of tens of thousands in Asia as well as a spiritual role model and inspiration to believers across the world. While there were some divergences regarding church order, it should be acknowledged that he was India's foremost evangelist and indigenous church planter, founding with his fellow workers more than 300 churches based on New Testament principles.

When he passed away on September 17, people from all over India and around the world came to pay their last homage and tribute to this saint of God. Weeping saints from across denominational barriers, languages, tribes and colors gathered together, praising God for every remembrance of this man who was indeed God's gift to the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ worldwide. News of his homecall spread like wildfire and more than 500,000 came to pay their last tribute to him from Sunday, September 17 through Friday September 22.

On Friday, September 22, 2000, the city of Hyderabad came to a standstill—all of the main roads were like a sea of saints, numbering according to some estimates, a quarter of a million. Shops and offices were closed. Traffic was diverted. Police and law enforcement officers struggled in vain to control the multitudes that participated in the funeral procession. It took about three hours for the procession to cover the distance of three kilometers from Hebron to the cemetery. The funeral procession turned out to be the largest gospel procession Hyderabad had ever witnessed, where the believers inched forward, holding Bibles and Scripture banners, singing and praising God. It was not a typical funeral procession; it was a victory parade for Christ triumphant, in honor of a servant who labored for Him faithfully for about 70 years. Bakht Singh was 93.



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you preview it, click OK and your news will be submitted. Try it!

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# Practical wisdom from Proverbs

*A chapter-by-chapter topical study.*

**H**ere is a small sample of a book recently released (1999) on the Proverbs by Louis Goldberg, formerly a professor of theology and Hebrew studies at Moody Bible Institute and now Scholar in Residence with Jews for Jesus. It is entitled, *The Practical Wisdom of Proverbs*.

Within the Old Testament, we note three classes of ministers with different functions. The *priest* ministered at the altar, offering up sacrifices on behalf of the people, thereby representing them before God. One of his basic tasks was to serve the people who came to worship. The *prophet* had an opposite ministry. Through various ways he received messages from God and delivered this word to the people, either through preaching or through prophecy, with its implications for the future. Therefore, the prophet represented God to the people. The functions of both priests and prophets can be seen in Jeremiah 18:18.

A third class of servants, however, is revealed in the same passage: the *sage* or *wise man*. His service was distinct from the prophet or priest, yet his wisdom was always in harmony with their message and function. Though the wise man did not claim inspiration for his counsel, the wisdom he possessed was given by God (Prov. 2:6). The wise man did not predict as did the prophet, but he had a most important function within Israel by giving practical advice to those who needed it.

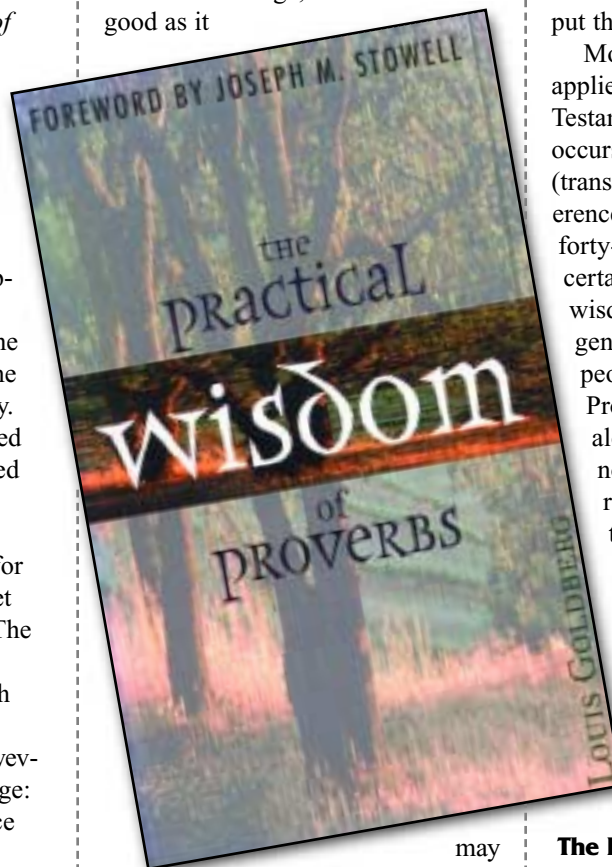
The person who sought wisdom did not have to speculate or act as a philosopher. Neither Old Testament wisdom nor the wisdom described in the book of James should be confused with the Greek idea of intellectual knowledge, as good as it

that will help him sift right from wrong. Said the wise man of the Scriptures, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge*" (Prov. 1:7). Since knowledge can be applied to the problems of life, it's as if the sage adds, "See to it that you put this knowledge into practice!"

Most of Proverbs is not to be applied exclusively to the Old Testament believer. The word *Israel* occurs only once, but the term man (translated from *adam*, a generic reference to all mankind) appears some forty-three times in Proverbs. With certain exceptions, therefore, the wisdom of the Old Testament is generally applicable everywhere to people of all times. The book of Proverbs is offered to all travelers along the road of life. We need not drift aimlessly in the currents of man's speculations; for those who seek it, the wisdom of God is applicable to all life's problems.

*(pp. 14-16)*

This book is available from Gospel Folio Press by calling 1-800-952-2382.



may be at times. Biblical wisdom is not theoretical. Rather it is a wisdom based on revelation from the God of truth Himself. God knows every situation a person will ever experience, and His divine revelation can provide a practical knowledge that will fit all the problems of life. Therefore, the person who wishes to be wise has access to wisdom

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# Practical friendliness

*Here is teaching that is very close to home.*

*A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. PROVERBS 18:24*

Even though all modern versions translate this verse differently, the King James Version enshrines the valuable truth that friendships must be cultivated. They thrive on attention but die through neglect.

An editorial in *Decision* magazine said, "Friendships don't just happen; they have to be cultivated—in short, we have to work at them. They are not built on just taking; they are built on giving. They are not just for the good times; they are for the bad times as well. We do not hide our needs from a true friend. Neither do we hold onto a friend only to have his help."

A good friend is worth keeping. He stands by you when you are falsely accused. He commends you for whatever is praiseworthy, and is frank to point out areas that need improvement. He keeps in touch over the years, sharing your joys and sorrows.

That is important—keeping in



touch. It can be done by letters, cards, phone calls, or visits. But friendship is a two-way street. If I consistently fail to answer letters, I am saying that I don't consider the friendship worth continuing. I am too busy. Or I can't be bothered. Or I hate writing letters. Few friendships can survive on continued neglect.

Our refusal to communicate is often a form of selfishness. We are thinking of ourselves—of the time, effort, and cost involved. True friendship thinks of others—how we can encourage or comfort or cheer or help; how we can minister spiritual

food to them.

How much we owe to friends who have come alongside with the Spirit-given word when it was most needed! There was a time in my life when I was feeling very low over a deep disappointment in Christian service. A friend who could not have known of my discouragement wrote a cheery letter in which she quoted Isaiah 49:4, "*Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.*" It was just the word I needed to pick me up and set me to work again.

Charles Kingsley wrote,

*Can we forget one friend,  
Can we forget one face,  
Which cheered us to the end,  
Which nerved us for our race?  
To godlike souls, how deep our debt!  
We would not, if we could, forget.*

Most of us have only a few close friends in life. That being so, we should do all in our power to keep those friendships strong and healthy.

—From *One Day at a Time* p. 212





# Look who quotes the Proverbs

*You can, too.*

A proverb is a truth encapsulated in a succinct way. As such it is portable. You may not readily remember great passages of Scripture, but you can always pack a few proverbs in your emergency kit to be used at a moment's notice.

Almost all of the proverbs that are quoted in the New Testament are taken from the Septuagint, a few phrases excepted. Let's have a look at the way these truisms are utilized.

Romans 3:15-17 quotes Proverbs 1:16. Paul calls up a courtroom full of witnesses for the prosecution, most from the Psalms (14:1-3; 53:1-3; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; and 36:1 in that order). The proverbs quoted in verses 15-17 are also found in slightly different words in Isaiah 59:7-8. We may use these verses with our acquaintances, to remind them of the diagnosis the Scriptures give of the human dilemma. The cross exposes it. History declares it. The conscience convicts of it. And Scripture says it, so all may realize their guilt and flee to Christ (Rom. 3:19-22).

Proverbs 1:16 sounds amazingly like world conditions as portrayed on the evening news. But as Paul applies it in Romans 3, he gives also the reason—*"There is no fear of God before their eyes"*—and in subsequent verses describes God's glorious solution through *"the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"* (v. 24).

Paul quotes Proverbs again in Romans 12:20, this time from 25:21-22. By this usage, he reminds us that grace is not only a New Testament idea. The God of the Old Testament revealed Himself as *"a gracious God"* (Jonah 4:2; see also Joel




2:13). And the proverb quoted, *"If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink,"* was given practical expression by those who knew this gracious God. Boaz did it with Ruth, a Moabite, whose ancestors had refused bread and water to his forefathers (see Deut. 23:3-4). Elisha did it for the Syrian soldiers who had actually come to kill him (2 Ki. 6:21-22)! David did it with Saul's household (2 Sam. 9:1-7) for Jonathan's sake. Of course, God does it every time sinners are saved, providing them with Christ, the Bread of heaven (Jn. 6:32).

Both James (4:6) and Peter (1 Pet. 5:5) find it helpful to remind us of the words of Proverbs 3:34, *"Surely He scorneth the scornors: but He giveth grace to the lowly."* The words may have been Solomon's paraphrase of his father's words in Psalm 138:6, *"Though the Lord be on high, yet He hath respect unto the lowly: but the proud He knoweth afar off."* Both NT quotes are from the Septuagint: *"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."* Obviously this is a sweeping

principle of cosmic proportions. It is seen in its greatest measure in the manifestation of the Christ and of the antichrist. When *"God was manifest in flesh"* (1 Tim. 3:16), it involved a humbling unparalleled in history (see Phil. 2). But proud man repeatedly vaunts himself throughout time until at last he *"opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God"* (2 Thess. 2:4). As A. J. Gordon wrote: *"The mystery of godliness is God humbling Himself to become man; the mystery of iniquity is man exalting himself to become God."*

Peter quotes the Proverbs more liberally than any other New Testament writer. As well as the citation already mentioned, he quotes Proverbs 10:12 (1 Pet. 4:8), Proverbs 11:31 (1 Pet. 4:18), and Proverbs 26:11 (2 Pet. 2:22). The first speaks of the mantle of love that covers sin, the second alludes to the suffering in life that judges sin in the house of God, and the third describes the evil nature that enslaves to sin, manifesting the unregenerate in their hopeless condition without God.

The last direct quote from Proverbs (3:11-12) is found in Hebrews 12:5-6. One of many *"my son"* statements from Solomon's pen, this one alone is selected to be reinforced by repetition (vv. 5-6), explanation (vv. 7-8), and application (vv. 9-13). Its message? There is a direct link between love and chastening, between sonship and suffering. Like may proverbs, it is worth its weight in gold. 

# Train up a child...

*What does this proverb really mean? Is it a guarantee?*

“**T**rain up a child in the way that he *should* go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).

Our children are some of the few earthly assets—transformed by the spiritual investment of time and effort—that we can take with us to heaven. The Scriptures urge us to be serious about training up the children the Lord has given to us. Parents are called to equip themselves for the struggle by holding unflinchingly to the Word of God. The proverb before us has been a treasured promise to many in the arena of child rearing. Many a seasoned believer, disheartened by the parental battle, has fallen back upon it for comfort.

Yet this proverb may be viewed as a two-sided coin—containing a promise and a warning. Inferentially, we are warned that by the neglect of this precept, if a child is not trained in the way he *should* go, he will nevertheless be trained by the principles of the secular world, molded by his own selfish and undisciplined desires. This “training” will ingrain in him thought patterns and habits that will turn his desire away from the things of God when he is older. Many a Christian, even those well along in their walk with Christ, have been plagued by the “training” of ungodly thoughts, memories, and experiences instilled in them when young.

The warning in this proverb should stir the thoughtful parent to more caution in the shaping and protecting of the young minds and lives entrusted into his care. Two ways lie before the child—the way he *would*

go, headlong into a life of sorrow; and the way he *should* go, a path which leads to “fullness of joy” and “pleasures for evermore.” Worldly pressures and lax permissiveness represent two ends of a cord pulled tightly, choking the spiritual potential out of a young life. The failure to protect and instruct children may lead to irreparable damage.

Scripture is unmistakably clear that raising a child is a full time and solemn responsibility. The careless neglect of a child when he is young will only result in a heart full of sorrow and pain when he is older.

We must never forget that there is also a promise contained in this important proverb. The hopes of two generations rest on it. First, there is the generation influenced during his formative years; and then there is the generation influenced when he is old. When we consider this solemn fact, it should not surprise us to see great emphasis laid on training in godliness. So much in the Christian life and spiritual service hinges on the training one receives in childhood.

The word “train” at the outset arrests our attention as we consider the meaning of this proverb. The Hebrew word translated “train” in our English Bibles is used only three other times in the Old Testament. It is variously translated as “to start up” and “to teach.” But the most accepted meaning of this word among Bible scholars is to “dedicate,” to set apart for a particular purpose or goal.

The same root word is used in its noun form for the feast of Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication.<sup>1</sup> Unless we are dedicated to training a child in the

principles, truths, and examples of the Scriptures, we leave him utterly helpless to withstand the enemy.

The present-day “Christian” parenting industry does little to equip parents in this training effort. It actually does harm by feeding parents’ fears that if they err in any way with their children, they might seriously damage the child forever. By fueling such concerns, they persuade parents to march lock-step with their psychology-laced programs, and to sign up for their parenting seminars year after year.

All too often, sincere parents become so dependent on so-called parenting “experts” that they are unable or unwilling to think for themselves. Frequently, these programs and seminars produce more confusion and doubt than help for struggling parents. These parents soon begin to regard child-rearing as a minefield strewn with dangers; one wrong step and you risk deep-seated and long-term emotional and psychological damage to your child.

Such parents become dependent on “pop” child-psychology programs that map out their every step, and they refuse to deviate from the plan, including those areas of the program that have no basis in Scripture. They are willing to defy both common sense and biblical principles for the sake of following a popular parenting program. This current trend should be a great concern to us all.

For centuries godly Christians have studiously avoided current fads of the day and sought to use biblical principles of child-training to great benefit. One of the most godly moth-

ers in the annals of Church history must undoubtedly be Susanna Wesley. This mother of John and Charles Wesley, who gave birth to 17 other children while assisting Samuel Wesley in his duties as a minister of the gospel in Epworth, England, would often pray as a young woman, “Lord, make my life count...” Heaven alone will record the full answer to this earnest prayer.

But it was her sons, John and Charles Wesley, along with George Whitefield, who lit the fires that would be called the First Great Awakening in England and in the American colonies. This spiritual revival would be the cause of thousands coming to Christ and the establishment of many churches. If John Wesley and Charles Wesley lit the fire of this great revival, surely Susanna Wesley was used of God to strike the first match by her spiritual rearing of these two men of God.

How did she train up a child in the way he should go? What biblical principles did she use in the raising of her family? Susanna Wesley used the following rules of child training:

- (1) Subdue self-will in the child and thus work together with God to save his soul. (2) Teach him to pray as soon as he can speak. (3) Give him nothing he cries for, and only what is good for him if he asks for it politely. (4) To prevent lying, punish no fault that is freely confessed, but never allow a rebellious, sinful act to go unnoticed. (5) Commend and reward good behavior. (6) Strictly observe all promises you have made to your child.<sup>2</sup>

Parents who have been the most committed and earnest about child training have usually seen the most spiritual blessing. These parents who have been filled with the holy desire to see their children love and reverence God, have made their children’s spiritual training their passion. High on their list of biblical priorities for their children is the reverential fear of God in their lives. Godly reverence is the sacred awe of God’s holiness. It is the respect and humility that results in reverent worship of Almighty God. Godly reverence also involves the

proper fear of God’s displeasure. True faith acknowledges God’s right to chasten because of sin. These godly parents have seen the danger of presenting God as always gentle, meek, and mild, to the exclusion of His attributes of justice and righteous anger. The absence of a full presentation of God’s attributes frequently results in a careless and flippant attitude towards God.

C. H. Spurgeon’s godly parents, John and Eliza, were eager to train their son in righteousness and the fear of God. As a young child, they read to him the Christian classic *Pilgrim’s Progress* by John Bunyan. Spurgeon once mentioned to a friend that during his lifetime he had read *Pilgrim’s Progress* over 100 times, but that his love for this book and Christ first came from his mother’s loving spiritual influence. She would awaken the family by singing hymns every morning, and each evening young Charles would hear her close the day by praying for the salvation of all the children in the family by name.

As a boy, his mother offered him a penny for every Isaac Watts’ hymn that he could memorize and recite perfectly. Soon he had memorized and recited over 100 hymns. Spurgeon later recounted with a smile that his mother reduced his wages from a penny per hymn to a farthing “so not to ruin me by the love of money.” His mother knew that the rich spiritual truths and the skillful phrasing of these hymns would have lasting spiritual value in his life.

Spurgeon recounts the great impact his godly parents and grandparents had on his life, but he writes that the reverential fear of God made the most lasting impression. Later in his life he wrote, “Sin, whatever it might be to other people, became to me an intolerable burden. It was not so much that I feared hell as that I feared sin, and all the while I had a concern for the honor of God’s name.”<sup>3</sup>

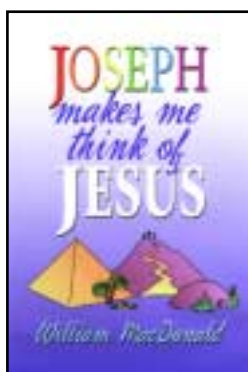
As he neared the end of his course, Spurgeon stated that the person who made the most significant spiritual contribution to his life was his mother, Eliza, and that he longed to be reunited with her. Eliza Spurgeon would doubtless agree with Solomon, that training up a child “*in the way he should go*” contains a great promise but also a solemn warning. May we be “trainers” of children, that when they are old they will walk in the right way, and that they in turn may become “trainers” themselves of the young lives entrusted into their care.

#### ENDNOTES:

1. Robert Alden, *Proverbs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), p. 160
2. William MacDonald, *Believer’s Commentary*, Proverbs (Nashville, TN: Nelson Publishers, 1995), p. 847
3. Rod Thomson, *Prince of Preachers* (Sarasota, FL: Christian Soldiers, 1999), p. 7



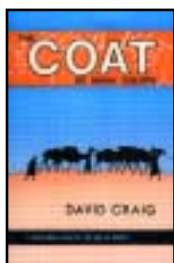




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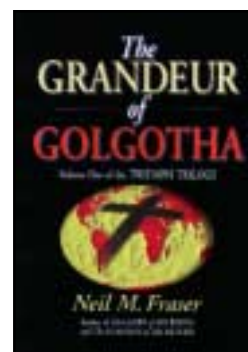
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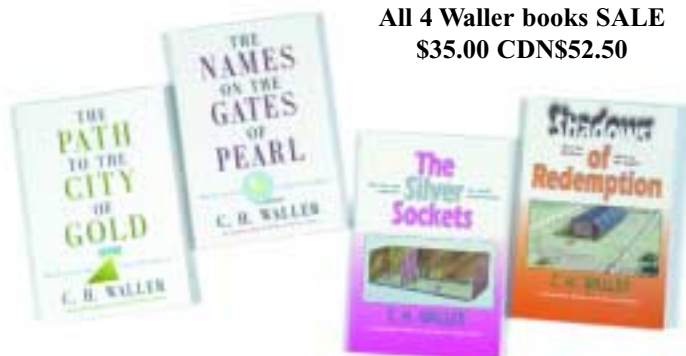
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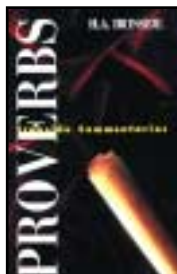
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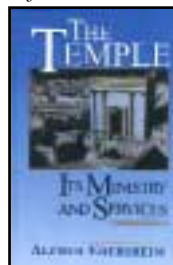




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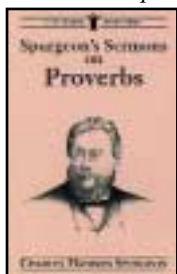
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*The highway  
of the upright is  
to depart from evil:  
he that keepeth  
his way preserveth his soul.  
Proverbs 16:17*

There are few things more pitiful than the professing Christian who, while he would fain keep company with those who “*mount up on wings*” and explore heavenly realities, at the same time cannot forego the delights he finds in those who “*mind earthly things.*” Oh, beloved fellow Christian, don’t be a bat!  
—Arthur Gook, *Can We Overcome?*  
pp. 16–17