
A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

which was more suited for public worship than the beautiful eulogy of "Sunday" by the somewhat earlier British poet GEORGE HERBERT; and Bishop KEN is famous not only for a morning hymn, *Awake, my soul, and with the sun,* and an evening hymn, *All praise to Thee, my God, this night,* which express delight in fellowship with God, but has also supplied in the closing lines of each A DOXOLOGY, which is, perhaps—the thought should be refreshing to all whose charity is as wide as Archbishop Tait's—more frequently sung by all denominations of English Christians than any other uninspired verse in their language. The eulogy of James Montgomery, a later poet, was not exaggerated, when he described it as

A masterpiece at once of amplification and compression: amplification on the burthen, "Praise God," repeated in each line; compression by exhibiting God as the object of praise in every view in which we can imagine praise due to Him;—praise for all His blessings, yea, for *all* blessings, none coming from any other source; praise by every creature, specially invoked, "here below" and in heaven "above;" praise to Him in each of the characters in which He is revealed in His Word—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Observations on the hymns of the two remaining periods of Church History, I must reserve for THE CHURCHMAN of December.

DAVID DALE STEWART.

Coulsdon Rectory, Surrey,
October, 1888.

ART. IV.—THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON.

THE short, pithy sentences of wisdom which we term proverbs have ever been a favourite mode of expression and of teaching, perhaps in the East more than elsewhere; yet no people has been without them. Among the Greeks we have the so-called Gnomic poets—Theognis, for instance, and Phocylides, the former giving us upwards of twelve hundred lines of sententious wisdom. In the classical writers of Greece and Rome we find proverbs quoted: "One swallow does not make a summer;"[1] and "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," were current in Greek. In the Western World one may mention the Welsh as especially rich in this kind. Of Welsh triads and proverbs, upon the whole upwards of twelve thousand have been gathered. Sancho Panza, in "Don Quixote," proves the fondness for proverbs in Spain. In England the successful sale of Mr. Tupper's "Proverbial

[1] *Ae swallow makes nae simmer* (Ramsay's "Reminiscences"). In referring to the large number of proverbs current in Scotland, Dean Ramsay points out that many of them are mere translations.

Philosophy"—though to nice critics his maxims may seem somewhat wordy and tedious, and lacking raciness and life—shows that he has hit a popular taste. Indeed, everyone familiar with our country people knows how much homely unwritten wit there is current in this shape. Most of us can point to, or remember, some village Solomon possessing a stock of proverbial sayings ready for almost any need.

To define a proverb is difficult, perhaps useless, definitions only provoking criticism. Any definition should include Solomon's proverbs; and yet the greater part of these are not like what we most commonly now mean by "proverbs." All proverbs are short, neat sayings, embodying some truth or moral lesson. But this may be done plainly and without metaphor (as in most of Solomon's) or with metaphor—*i.e.*, the literal meaning is not all, the words point us to something further. Of this kind are our commonest proverbs, such as "Little pitchers have long ears;" "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." Something well known in nature, in the animal world, etc., is made to convey a lesson. A comparison is suggested, the hearer or reader has to perceive what it is; and such proverbs have this advantage, that the learner is more likely to be taken by, and to remember, the homely truth thus put than the same lesson given barely without comparison. And, again, some proverbs express plainly the comparison—*e.g.*, "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion." These are, in fact, short didactic similes. And sometimes the comparison is not obvious, and is left unexplained to stimulate ingenuity. The proverb is something of a riddle, a "dark saying." Such is Prov. i. 17: "In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird," capable (as commentaries show) of many interpretations and applications.

The usual Greek word for proverb—παροιμία—is thus explained by Greek glossaries: (1) παροιμίαι. νουθεσίαι ὠφέλιμοι τῷ βίῳ, ἠθῶν ἔχουσαι ἐπανόρθωσιν; (2) ἡ παροιμία ἐστι λόγος ἀπόκρυφος δι' ἑτέρου προδήλου σημαινόμενος. The first explanation states the aim and use of proverbs, the second their usually figurative nature. Another word, παραβολή, is defined by the Greeks in nearly the same way; and, indeed, it is often used where "proverb" would now be the natural English. For instance, in St. Luke iv. 23: "Ye will surely say to me this *proverb* (τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην), Physician, heal thyself." While, on the contrary, παροιμία is sometimes used where in English we should naturally use "parable"—*e.g.*, in St. John x. 6, after the description of the Good Shepherd: "This *parable* (παροιμίαν) spake Jesus to them." Compare St. John xvi. 25, 29: "These things have I spoken to you in *parables;* but the

hour cometh when I shall no longer speak to you in *parables* (παροιμίαις), but shall show you plainly (παρρησίᾳ) of the Father;" "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no *parable*" (παροιμίαν). In these passages the Revised Version has "parable" in St. Luke iv. 23 for παραβολήν, and in St. John "parable" in x. 6, but in xvi. 25, 29, "proverb" for παροιμία, which seems inconsistent. The fact seems to be that the Greek words are almost interchangeable, both implying metaphor, figure, comparison. In Sirach xxxix. 5 we have both coupled together: ἀπόκρυφα παροιμιῶν ἐκζητήσει, καὶ ἐν αἰνίγμασι παραβολῶν ἀναστραφήσεται. Both Greek words represent the Hebrew *Mashal*, which certainly means "similitude;" though, as before said, Solomon's proverbs that bear the Hebrew word for title of the book are many of them plain and direct, spoken (as we might put it in Greek) παρρησίᾳ, καὶ οὐ παροιμίᾳ.

The Book of Proverbs in our Bible is, doubtless, the most important collection of the kind. Its canonical authority has never been questioned. Though one title is given to the whole book, there are several divisions of it: a prologue of continuous exhortation; Solomon's proverbs; a briefer epilogue of exhortation; "the words of the wise;" another set of Solomon's proverbs; then two chapters differing from the rest in style. We may reasonably accept Solomon as the author of all to xxiv. 22. The "words of the wise" may have been gathered by Solomon or by others, as the additional proverbs of Solomon are said to have been by "the men of Hezekiah." We have no distinct evidence when Solomon wrote his Proverbs, or, indeed, that he *wrote* them at all, only that "he spake three thousand proverbs;" yet the distinct plan, with a beginning, middle, and ending of chaps. i.-xxiv. 22, points that way. Differences of tone there are and of moral height—shrewd and worldly maxims here and there mixed with the generous and heavenly; but this might be expected in that age, which was not one of skilful book-making and arrangement. Repetitions there are; but these, too, are natural enough; revision and correction was little practised in those non-printing days.

I do not purpose to discuss doubtful points of the exact proportions of Solomon's authorship. Rather, assuming the bulk of the book to be his, to examine its general tone and scope; its likeness to some others of the Old Testament; the different kinds of proverbs contained in it, with coincidences and illustrations from other writers; its quotation or use in the New Testament. And this will be done most clearly by following in the main the order of chapters, but sometimes grouping together what treats of the same subject.

The proem, or prologue, is of high tone throughout. After stating his aim, to give wisdom and knowledge, and describing in ver. 6 the different kinds of proverbs (*παραβολὴν καὶ σκοτεινὸν λόγον ἐήσεις τε σοφῶν καὶ αἰνίγματα*), the author strikes the keynote in ver. 7: "The fear of the LORD" (Jehovah) "is the beginning of knowledge."[1] And honour to parents is a first and earliest duty. "Be not tempted to evil-doing; it brings ruin," is the gist of vers. 10-19. And then Wisdom personified makes her appeal and utters her warning. Chaps. ii., iii., iv. exhort a son or sons to wisdom, warn against sins of dishonesty and especially against lust. This last sin is further treated of in chaps. v., vi., vii.; but honourable wedded love is commended (vi. 18). In this hortatory part are many verses which we might call proverbs, some of which are afterwards repeated. Constantly all is referred to "the Lord"—in the noble chaps. viii. and ix. we see this; in ix. 10 the keynote, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," is again struck. Noteworthy quotations from the prologue are Heb. xii. 5, 6, a passage agreeing with the LXX. against the Hebrew; Heb. xii. 13; and Jas. iii. 6 and 1 Peter v. 5, both from Prov. iii. 34.

Chap. viii. deserves some special notice. Wisdom is personified more fully than before; she promises and warns. This bringing on an abstract quality as a person reminds us of some notable instances in the classical writers. In the Choice of Hercules—that beautiful apologue of Prodicus which Xenophon gives us (Mem. ii. 1)—Virtue appears to the hero entering on manhood in female form, urging him to the higher calling, "to scorn delights and live laborious days;" while Vice in appearance and enticing words is very like the harlot of Prov. vii. 10-21. And Socrates (who is the speaker in Xenophon) again, in Plato's Crito, imagines the laws in person to address him and blame his intended escape. Aristophanes in the "Clouds" brings on the stage Just argument and Unjust pleading in somewhat similar style for virtue and vice.

Wisdom is said to have been with the Lord "in the beginning of his way" before the creation. The parallel of this whole passage with Job xxviii. is obvious (indeed, the likeness of many passages in Job to those of Proverbs is remarkable); but we may also surely compare the beginning of the Gospel of St. John (*Θεολόγου*): "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν*. All things were made by Him." We can hardly fail to see in this wisdom of God, working in the making of the worlds, a foreshadowing of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity (cf. 1 Cor. i. 30). In ver. 12, the

[1] Noticeable in Proverbs is the frequency of "The LORD (Jehovah)," the rarity of "GOD (Elohim)."

LXX. has ἐγὼ ἡ σοφία κατεσκήνωσα βουλὴν καὶ γνῶσιν. Is it too fanciful to suppose that this phrase may have partly suggested the wording of (and be explained by) ὁ Λόγος ἐγένετο σάρξ καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν?

In chap. ix. Wisdom is represented as preparing her house and a feast, sending forth her servants to bid the guests: "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled" . . . "by me . . . the years of thy life shall be increased." This reminds us of Christ's parable of the marriage feast, and His offer of the Bread of Life. Contrasted with this is the invitation of the foolish woman ("Folly," R.V. marg.) to sweet stolen waters and pleasant bread in secret, whereof the end to the guests is death and hell.

With chap. x. begin the proverbs proper; chaps. x.-xv. consist chiefly of antithetic parallels or contrasts, one in each verse. A careful attention to the parallelism of members will often help to bring out the meaning. Sometimes the LXX. throws light on a verse, where our rendering of the Hebrew seems to fail. The general gist of these proverbs is to contrast wisdom with folly, righteousness with unrighteousness, industry with sloth. As we advance further some of the proverbs become more special, more prudential and shrewd maxims; but constantly "the Lord" is held forth as the rewarder of the good, the punisher of the evil, the controller of all.

Chap. xi. 22. "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman that is without discretion." An often-quoted proverb, the point of it being the incongruity of a fair outside when within is foulness. The LXX. is neat, ὥσπερ ἐνώτιον ἐν ῥινὶ ὑὸς, οὕτως γυναικὶ κακόφρονι κάλλος. In Sophocles, King Œdipus, on discovery of his unwitting sin that must mar his fair fortune, terms himself κάλλος κακῶν ὕπουλον—"a fair outside with foul sore below."

Ver. 31. "The righteous shall be recompensed on the earth; how much more the wicked and the sinner" (LXX.: εἰ ὁ μὲν δίκαιος μόλις σώζεται, ὁ ἀσεβὴς καὶ ἁμαρτωλὸς ποῦ φανεῖται). Quoted in 1 Pet. iv. 18. The English version most persons would understand to mean "the righteous will receive a good reward . . . the wicked will receive punishment." But the logic of "much more" then fails; it should be "just so." There is, however, no doubt that the Hebrew particles do express "much more." And the Hebrew word *yĕshūlam*—"there shall be payment made"—may be taken of punishment upon earth to the righteous for his unavoidable shortcomings. The LXX. and St. Peter's authority together appear decisive on this side.

Chap. xii. 10. "A righteous man regardeth the life of his

beast." Kindness to animals commended by the greatest naturalist of his time. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," teaches the same: and (perhaps) Balaam's exceptional severity which was rebuked.

Chap. xiii. 7, 8. About riches and poverty. Some make great show of wealth, but have it not; some just the reverse. Riches are useful, "the ransom of a man's life." In an age of violence this might literally be so; there were captives ransomed, also blood-fines were paid for those slain, and their rich slayers thus free of danger, as we read in the Icelandic Sagas. But if the rich have this advantage, the poor, on the other hand, do not incur such risk, are safe from "threatening;" ver. 8, "Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator." It is interesting to remark the ideas of Solomon and his age about the rich and poor. The poor "is hated even of his neighbour, the rich hath many friends;" "the poor useth entreaties, the rich answereth roughly." Yet "he that hath pity on the poor" is commended; the rich are to be generous, or they will suffer; "a people will curse" the niggard of his corn; God sees all, will judge between rich and poor, defend the widow. The poor are accepted as a fact, and are to be kindly treated; yet poverty is looked on in the main as caused by unthrift and indolence. Riches, on the contary, are an element of strength, "a crown to the wise;" but hasting to get them is dangerous, and likely to lead to wrong. Much of the tone of Proverbs is echoed in the Psalms, but distinctly with more tenderness for the poor. To the spirit of the Gospel *μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί*, the blessedness of the humble spirit often attending poverty, and the great spiritual risk incident to riches, Solomon does not attain.

Ver. 20. *συμπορευόμενος σοφοῖς σοφὸς ἔσει, ὁ δὲ συμπορευόμενος ἄφροσι γνωσθήσεται.* The last word here, differing from the Hebrew "shall smart for it" or "be broken," plainly implies that the companion of fools will become a fool. Menander's proverb, quoted by St. Paul, is to the same effect, *φθείρουσιν ἤθη χρήσθ' ὁμιλίαι κακαί.*

Ver. 24. On the subject of personal chastisement for the young, Solomon is plain enough here, and in chaps. xix. 18, xxii. 15, xxiii. 13, xxix. 15, fathers are advised to it, and sons exhorted to look on chastening as proof of fatherly love in chap. iii. 11, 12. So in Job v. 17, 18, "Happy is the man whom God correcteth." And in Heb. xii. 5 the passage in Prov. iii. 11, 12 is quoted.

Chap. xiv. 28. We find (as might be expected in the proverbs of a king) much about kingly power and duties. "The multitude of his people is his glory;" he must not be (in Homer's words) a *δημοβόρος βασιλεύς*, "a devourer of his people."

His lips must give "a Divine sentence," not "transgress in judgement," he must not "commit wickedness," nor suffer wrong in others (xvi. 10-13). He is a "winnower of the wicked;" "mercy and truth" preserve his throne (xx. 28). Great power had kings in those days; terrible their wrath, refreshing their favour (xix. 12, xx. 2). But the Lord is over even kings, "turneth the king's heart whithersoever He will, as the watercourse," as the gardener easily draws the stream of water through the trenches he cuts. A simile from such irrigation is used by Homer (Il. φ 257), speaking of "a man who turns a stream of water by cut channels over his plants and gardens."

Chap. xv. 19. The sluggard is severely reproved in several places. He finds "a lion in the way and difficulties." Here the LXX. has *ὁδοὶ ἀργῶν ἐστρωμέναι ἀκάνθαις, αἱ δὲ τῶν ἀνδρείων τετριμμέναι*; the contrast is brought out very neatly. The Greek word used for the highway may be illustrated by Aristophanes' (*Nub.* 123) *ἀτραπὸς ξύντομος τετριμμένη* "easy, short and beaten way" to the under-world.

Ver. 22. This proverb about "multitude of counsellors" is often misapplied. Comparing xi. 14, where are nearly the same words, it is plainly spoken of a nation having a good and wise senate, a strong body of counsellors, without whom "the people falleth," not of one person perplexing himself with the conflicting advice of many.

Ver. 27. "He that taketh gifts." Was bribery of judges especially common then? There seem many allusions in Psalms and Proverbs to such perversion of justice, "taking reward to slay the innocent." The custom of presents to great men in the East was so prevalent that it might easily degenerate into corruption. Indeed, gifts to great men are rather advised in xviii. 16, "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men." We may compare the Greek proverb, *δῶρα θεοὺς πείθει δῶρ' αἰδοίους βασιλῆας.*

Ver. 33. "Before honour goeth humility." Repeated in xviii. 12 with a contrast, that is also in xvi. 18. It is, indeed, an often-repeated truth, occurring again in xxix. 24. Cambridge men will remember its enforcement in the two gates of honour and humility at Caius College.

Chap. xvi. In this and the following chapters the contrasts in each verse are not so prevalent. Some maxims are rather more prudential and worldly (though with frequent reference to the keynote, "the fear of the Lord"), and several repetitions of former proverbs are to be found.

Ver. 18. The word used for "pride" in the LXX. is *ὕβρις*, by which we are reminded of passages in Æschylus about *ὕβρις*, *e.g.*, *Pers.* 821, *ὕβρις γὰρ ἐξανθοῦσ' ἐκάρπωσε στάχυν ἄτης*—Pride

blossoms and bears fruit; destruction in the end is its harvest. So, too, in Herodotus we find more than once the idea that a jealous heaven brings down the overgrown and haughty (Herod. vii. 10).

Ver. 24. "Pleasant words are as an honeycomb." Of Nestor's words Homer says ἀπὸ στόματος μέλιτος γλυκίων ῥέεν αὐδή (Il. α 249). Parallels from the Psalms will occur to all.

Ver. 31. "The hoary head is a crown of glory," cf. xx. 29. Respect for old age we find urged by the best Greeks and Latins, yet with many complaints of its burdens and ills. A very beautiful picture of old age is given in the opening of Plato's "Republic," where Socrates draws out the aged Cephalus to speak of it. Cephalus concludes that old age itself is not chargeable with many of the evils put down to it, rather the character and temper of particular persons is to blame, persons who find toil and trouble in every age; that old age brings peace and freedom from many hard masters, and that a good conscience gives then the best hope, for that there are rewards for the righteous, and punishment for the wicked in an after state, is a conviction that grows upon the old as death draws near.

Chap. xvii. 9. "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love." Of this and chap. x. 12 we have the sense in 1 Peter iv. 1, ἡ ἀγάπη καλύψει πλῆθος ἁμαρτιῶν.

Ver. 10. How bitter is Solomon against fools! "You can't knock sense into some folk," is a village version I have heard of this verse. The fool may be rich (ver. 16), but it is of no use; "riches are a crown to the wise," but fools remain fools, rich though they be (xiv. 24). The understanding man finds wisdom "before his face" (at hand) everywhere; "the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth," *i.e.*, look far and find it not, xvii. 24. Yet it is plain that Solomon is speaking of those not only intellectually but morally foolish.

Ver. 17. "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." About friendship and brotherhood there are several proverbs in this collection. "Bare is back without brother behind it," is a well-known Western one. In xviii. 24 a friend seems even preferred to a brother, though many friends are but "to destruction." In ver. 18 of the same chapter "a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city." But the LXX. here has ἀδελφὸς ὑπὸ ἀδελφοῦ βοηθούμενος ὡς πόλις ὀχυρὰ καὶ ὑψηλή, making the whole verse in praise of a brother. In xxvii. 10 an old friend seems preferred to a brother; but, perhaps, the whole sense of that verse is "Do not forsake (in his calamity) thy father's friend, but be not always taking thy own calamities to thy brother's house." The end of the verse may be taken as a separate piece of advice, not a

reason, there is no "for" in the Hebrew. When you seek help, a near friend is better than a far brother.

Chap. xviii. 4. "The words of a man's mouth," cf. ver. 20 and xx. 5. Solomon has much about talk and silence; he certainly leans to the proverbs "Silence is golden," "Least said soonest mended." A fool is always ready to talk (ver. 2), the wise man "spareth his words" (xvii. 27). "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (ver. 21), a theme on which St. James enlarges, iii. 2-12.

Ver. 22. "A wife . . . a good thing," "a prudent wife from the Lord," xix. 14. And sons are earnestly counselled to obey their mothers. But there is much (probably more) about contentious and quarrelsome women, and about the ruinous evil from bad women. Wise in his written words was Solomon about the very evil that led him astray. Faithfulness to "the wife of thy youth" he urges on his son (ver. 18, 19).

Chap. xix. 22. "The desire of a man is the measure of his kindness." This (the Revised) rendering appears to mean that the goodwill and motive makes the gift, and the poor man (who gives little) is better than the (rich) man who falsely gets credit for generosity, or who promises and does not perform. The LXX. has *κρεισσων πτωχὸς δίκαιος ἢ πλούσιος ψευδής*. A lesson enforced by the widow's mite. But the first half of the verse, according to Gesenius, means "Kindness is the most desirable thing in a man."

Chap. xx. 16. Another warning against suretiship. It seems rather severe business-like advice: "From such a careless one get what you can while you can."

Ver. 25. "It is a snare to a man rashly to say, it is holy, and after vows to make inquiry." This (the R.V.) is in accordance with the main sense of the LXX.: *παγὶς ἀνδρὶ ταχύ τι τῶν ἰδίων ἁγιάσαι, μετὰ γὰρ τὸ εὔξασθαι μετανοεῖν γίνεται*. Everyone will be reminded of Jephthah's vow. And we may compare Christ's reproof of those who withheld due help from parents on plea of such a vow, "It is Corban."

Chap. xxi. 3. A truth much urged in Psalms, prophets and New Testament (cf. ver. 27), and the well-known lines of Horace, "Immunis aram si tetigit manus," etc. Hands to approach the altar must be "washed in innocency;" our brother must have nought against us.

Chap. xxii. 8. Quoted, but not exactly, in 2 Cor. ix. 7. With verse 16 ends the central set of proverbs. An exhortation follows, enforcing trust in God, docility, study, justice, kindness, prudence, sobriety, chastity. It ends, as did the prologue, with warning. Some verses repeat former maxims. Some passages resemble many parts of the Psalms,

e.g., the comparison of the drunken man (xxiii. 34) to one "that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or . . . upon the top of a mast," recalls Psalm cvii. 27, "they reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man;" and xxiv. 1, 19-22 are very like Psalm xxxvii., "Fret not thyself," etc.

At ver. 23 begin "the sayings of the wise"—such men, we may suppose, as those named in 1 Kings iv. 31. Some verses are nearly the same as earlier proverbs. Ver. 33 repeats vi. 10, 11. Ver. 29, "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me," is remarkable as being rather Christian than Jewish.

Chap. xxv. Again Solomon's Proverbs, but confessedly a later compilation. The LXX. entitles them *αἱ παιδεῖαι Σολομῶντος αἱ ἀδιάκριτοι ἃς ἐξεγράψαντο οἱ φίλοι Ἐζεκίου τοῦ βασιλέως τῆς Ἰουδαίας.* The word *ἀδιάκριτοι* Schleusner seems inclined to interpret "not to be distinguished or separated from the former set," a sort of appendix, or "indisputable," undoubtedly Solomon's. But in Gen. i. 2 the version of Symmachus uses *ἀδιάκριτον* of the primeval unarranged chaos. And *ἀδιάκριτοι* here might better mean "not arranged or distinguished according to subject," a miscellaneous collection with no definite beginning or ending. Something of this absence of arrangement might also be charged on the former set of proverbs, as would be likely in those times. This second set is harder in some respects than the first. There are certainly more proverbs of metaphor and comparison in chaps. xxv.-xxvii.

Chap. xxv. There are some interesting New Testament parallels in this chapter. After some words on the wisdom of kings and their duty, vers. 6, 7 advise: "Put not thyself forward in the presence of the king. . . . Better is it that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, than that thou shouldest be put lower." Our Lord's parable, "When thou art bidden," etc., will occur to all. Again, vers. 8-10, "Go not forth hastily to strive," etc., we find illustrated by "Agree with thine adversary," etc., and partly by St. Luke xiv. 32; and ver. 9 especially by St. Matthew xviii. 15, "If thy brother trespass . . . tell him his fault between thee and him alone." And the comparison in ver. 14, "As clouds and wind without rain, so is he that boasteth himself of his gifts falsely," may have suggested *νεφέλαι ἄνυδροι* of Jude 12, and *πηγαὶ ἄνυδροι* of 2 Peter ii. 17. And vers. 21, 22, however to be interpreted, are quoted in Rom. xii. 20.

Ver. 13, "The cold of snow." The mixing of snow with wine in hot weather, a practice usual among the Eastern nations, is alluded to. Some of the Palestinian mountains would supply it. To the refreshing effect of such cooled drink are here compared the words of a faithful messenger. The

LXX. has ἔξοδος χιόνος, which might seem to mean "the fall of snow;" for which one critic proposes ὀξύτης, "keen cold." Certainly "a fall" of snow cannot be meant; that would be probably unknown in the harvest heat, and anything but refreshing. Indeed, in xxvi. 1 it is used as a proverb for the impossible or incompatible—"Snow in summer" is like "honour for a fool."

Vers. 16, 17. "Hast thou found honey . . . hate thee." The two verses go together. This is plain from the LXX.: μέλι εὑρὼν φάγε τὸ ἱκανόν, μήποτε πλησθεὶς ἐξεμέσῃς. σπάνιον εἴσαγε σὸν πόδα πρὸς σεαυτοῦ φίλον, μήποτε πλησθεὶς σου μισήσῃ σε—Too much of a friend's sweet society may satiate.

Ver. 20. "He that taketh away a garment in cold weather" does it unseasonably. Horace compares the unseasonable and useless to "Pænula solstitio, campestre nivalibus auris."

Ver. 28. The comparison of the man without control of himself to an unwalled city reminds one a little of the Homeric ἕρκος ὀδόντων.

Chap. xxvi. 2. "The causeless curse lighteth not"—does not fall on the intended victim. The illustration is curious: the "swallow" is a bird that seldom alights; not so the "sparrow," as R.V. has it, and LXX. στρουθοί. But probably it is only the seemingly purposeless flying hither and thither of birds that is meant. In Aristophanes ("Birds," l. 169, 170) we have ἄνθρωπος ὄρνις ἀστάθμητος πετόμενος, ἀτέκμαρτος, οὐδὲν οὐδεποτ' ἐν ταὐτῷ μένων. So in xxvii. 8 a wandering man is compared to a bird.

Vers. 3-12. Of fools. Ver. 3. Parables are as useless to fools as his legs to the lame. R.V. has "hang loose" for the Authorized "are not equal;" Heb., "are lifted up." In ver. 8 "gems" among common stones seems better than the old "stone in a sling," which is the right thing in the right place. Ver. 11 is quoted with somewhat different Greek wording in 2 Peter ii. 22.

Ver. 17. The meddler with another's strife is like "one that taketh a dog by the ears." LXX. has κρατῶν κέρκου. Experts, I believe, recommend seizure of the *tail* to part quarrelsome dogs; but this proverb is mainly meant to emphasize the danger.

Chap. xxvii. 6. "The kisses of an enemy;" ἐχθρῶν ἄδωρα δῶρα κρεῖττον ὀνήσιμα. "Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes."

Vers. 23-27. Praise of thrifty husbandry: cf. Virgil's "O fortunati nimium . . . agricolæ!"

Chap. xxviii. 24, "Whoso robbeth his father or his mother and saith, It is no transgression." This, some Jews argued, was allowable if property was "corban," or dedicated. But our Lord rebuked this; and Solomon is strong for filial duty: cf. xx. 20, xxiii. 22.

Chap. xxix. 13. The poor are not to be oppressed. The LXX. here speaks of creditor and debtor.

Chap. xxx. About the first three verses there is much uncertainty. Who were the men named is not known; it is not quite sure whether Ithiel and Ucal are proper names. From xxx. 1 to xxxi. 9 is differently placed in the LXX., being put in xxiv., and beginning thus: τάδε λέγει ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῖς τισπεύουσι θεῷ, καὶ παυομαι. Leaving these difficulties, we see the gist of the chapter to be a confession of man's ignorance compared with God's knowledge, in the spirit of Job xxxviii.; a prayer; then some wise sayings rather longer than proverbs.

Ver. 4 is alluded to in John iii. 13.

Ver. 8. "Neither poverty nor riches." The advantage of the middle state has often been the theme of moralist and poet: παντὶ μέσῳ τὸ κράτος θεὸς ὤπασε (Æschylus); "The food that is needful;" τὰ δέοντα καὶ τὰ αὐτάρκη are "our daily bread."

Vers. 24-28. Lessons from natural history, in which Solomon had great knowledge, and so, doubtless, others his contemporaries. The ants are elsewhere quoted for prudence by Solomon, as by writers of all times. The "conies" of the Bible are not our rabbits; LXX., χοιρογρύλλιοι. Gesenius supposes them "jerboas," but modern travellers say they are the *Hyrax Syriacus* (rock-badger), about the size of rabbits, but not of the rabbit kind. For wisdom *we* do not quote the rabbit; but, curiously enough, he is the wise creature who outwits "brother fox" in the plantation legends of Uncle Remus.

The lizard is called εὐάλωτος in LXX., and so in R.V. margin, "Thou canst seize with thy hands." This gives a proper contrast, which is lost in the common rendering.

Vers. 29-31. Three stately animals to which a king is compared—(1) the lion, (2) the greyhound or war-horse, (3) the he-goat. The LXX. gives in place of the second "a cock strutting about with hens," which recalls κόμπασον θαρσῶν ἀλέκτωρ ὥστε θηλείας πέλας (Æsch., Ag. 1656), but is not likely to be right. To the he-goat LXX. adds, "leader of the flock." Homer compares Ulysses to "a ram;" Agamemnon to "a bull out-topping the herd;" and a warrior going proudly to battle is compared to στατὸς ἵππος (Il. ζ 506).

Ver. 17, on filial duty, seems misplaced among the triads; it would better come before or after them.

Chap. xxxi. Words of Lemuel, or his mother's words to him. Nothing is known of Lemuel. Vers. 2-9 warn against women and wine; then follows a noble picture of a virtuous woman. If these be really the words of a woman, a king's mother, they are doubly interesting; and they form no unworthy conclusion to the Book of Proverbs—the woman that shall be praised is she "that feareth the Lord."

W. C. Green.