

## **She Openeth Her Mouth with Wisdom**

*"He that sinneth against Wisdom wrongeth his own soul.  
All they that hate her love death" (Prov. 8:36).*

### **THE BOOK OF PROVERBS**

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We are at present reading the Proverbs together -- the book of the Spirit -- the book of detailed instruction for our daily walk.

As we view the state of the world, in this age of so much cleverness and so little wisdom, so much mechanical accomplishment and so little true living or understanding of life, we are deeply and sadly and thankfully impressed with the crying need for divine guidance and instruction.

The Proverbs, like the rest of Scripture, teach us two basic, elemental lessons upon which all true accomplishment by man must be built --

"It is not in man himself to direct his way aright."

And --

"The fear of God is the BEGINNING of wisdom."

Until by meditation, and experience, and self-examination, we are impressed to the depths of our being with these two cardinal truths, we can make little progress in life.

The great revelation of the Bible is that man is naturally evil and foolish, that God is all wisdom, and that man's wisdom lies in seeking God with the whole being, and learning the teachings of His Word.

The more we see the wise of the world rejecting the eternal Word of God and building on the shifting sands of their own man-made, man-centered philosophies, and the more we observe the tragic results of this in corruption, immorality and violence, the more we are impressed with the infinite value of God's Word, and the infinite superiority of God's Way -- the Way of Beauty and Holiness and Truth and Life -- as compared with man's natural way of lust, pleasure, emptiness, greed and death.

The spirit of the Proverbs is awe and reverence, and the fullest recognition of man's littleness and weakness. Its lessons are many, but outstanding among them are these eternal truths --

1. In the long run, good and prosperity are the destiny of the righteous. Sin and self-pleasing, however temporarily successful, are manifested to be stupidity and self-destruction.
2. God's correction indicates His love. Education, discipline, self-restraint in harmony with spiritual law, constitute the way of wisdom and life.

3. All mental and physical powers, and all desires and strivings for holiness and spiritual beauty, are the gracious blessings and gifts of a loving Father, and to be joyfully used to His glory.

The Proverbs emphasize -- perhaps more than any other book of Scripture -- the vital truth that the Gospel of salvation is a WAY OF LIFE. It concerns and must control ALL activities of the mind and body, if it is to mean anything.

Being "in the Truth" is infinitely more than just believing a set of doctrines. If our whole life -- everything we are or think -- is not consciously striving toward ever-increasing harmony with God, we are on the way of death.

One thing is certain: If we truly get the glorious message of Proverbs, if we truly comprehend and appreciate the greatness of God's gracious love toward us, if we truly realize the magnitude and urgency of the joyful work that lays before us, to serve and glorify God and prepare ourselves for His eternal companionship -- then we shall never have either the time or inclination to cry or feel sorry for ourselves. We shall be too busy doing and rejoicing.

TO FEEL SORRY FOR OURSELVES IS A REPROACH AGAINST THE LOVE AND GOODNESS OF GOD. It is shallow, cowardly faithlessness. It cannot be anything but displeasing to Him.

The Hebrew title of the Book of Proverbs is Mashal, meaning "a comparison." The great theme of the Proverbs is the comparison between wisdom and folly, more specifically and pictorially -- between the wise man and the fool.

We will have noted that the chapter read this morning (26) says much about the fool and his folly; and the Proverbs -- and all Scripture -- puts the vast majority of mankind into this pitiful, perishing class.

Wisdom offers life and joy; Folly offers sorrow and death.

Proverbs draw a clear, sharp line that divides all mankind into two distinct classes: the wise and the fools. The dividing line is the reverent fear of God --

"The fear of God is the BEGINNING of wisdom."

All on one side of the line are fools -- on the way to death and eternal oblivion, regardless of what their natural fleshly accomplishments may be.

All on the other side of the line are wise -- on the way to life, regardless of the limitations of their education or their natural abilities.

The fear of the Lord is the BEGINNING of wisdom. Let us always keep that vividly before our minds.

Is it necessary to study and obey the Proverbs to gain eternal life? Will we fail and be rejected if we do not? In the light of the clear warnings and declarations of Scripture, it would be folly to answer anything but "Yes." The introductory six verses make that clear.

As Psalms reveals and teaches the heart and character of godliness, so Proverbs teaches the mind and conduct. Paul declares --

"ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God ... that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

-- and this is a very important and unique part of that Scripture, containing things we cannot learn elsewhere.

Much of the early part of Proverbs seems to be directed to private and personal chastity.

While this is vitally important, and basic to a life of godliness, and while this matter is the world's besetting evil, and while the Divine commands concerning it require teaching and emphasizing and defending today to a degree we would never have dreamed -- even just a generation ago -- would ever be necessary in this so-called "Christian" country, still the real lesson and teaching is deeper and broader and higher.

The evil woman to be avoided is Folly personified, just as the wise woman to be sought is Wisdom personified.

It is remarkably characteristic of Proverbs that there is no reference to the many specific aspects of life under the Law of Moses, as the Sabbath, Tithing, Feasts, Sacrifices, etc.

This is clearly a divine book of instruction for all times, and for all circumstances. Those who do not accept the divine origin of the book cannot see how Israel -- so bound by the limited horizons of the Mosaic Law -- could produce such a book of instruction in daily walk that takes no special recognition of that Law.

The Proverbs are "dark sayings." They require study -- searching out -- prayerful meditation, for their understanding; and wisdom and discernment in their application. In today's reading we are told (Prov. 26:7):

"The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools."

The Proverbs are not for the shallow-minded, nor for superficial study. Again, they themselves tell us in yesterday's readings (25:2)

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing":

"But the honor of kings is to search out a matter."

In this connection -- in what version should we study them? How can we best get at the original message? In the Authorized Version, or modern ones?

It would be nice to think that there are simple, clear, accurate versions in the normal language of today where we could -- easily learn the thoughts of the mind of God without having to search and compare.

And truly there are many modern versions that are very easy to read and understand. But are we -- in them -- understanding the true revelation of the mind of God, or what some man or men think God meant? Sadly we find it is the latter.

The Authorized, or "King James," version truly is far from perfect. Many more and older manuscripts have been found since it was translated. Furthermore, even this version to some extent unavoidably reflects the personal beliefs of the translators.

But it has two basic, vital virtues that no modern version seems to possess, and without which any version is worse than useless:

1. It was translated by men who reverently believed the Bible to be the wholly and divinely-inspired Word of God, and
2. It is truly a respectful TRANSLATION of God's Own Word, and not -- like all modern versions -- a PARAPHRASE and INTERPRETATION screened through the fallible judgments and opinions of erring men in their own words as to what they think the author (they are not sure who he was) meant to say.

The Revised Version of 1871, and the American Version of 1911, were prepared in the same spirit as the Authorized Version, using material that had become available in the intervening 300 years, bringing the language somewhat up-to-date and correcting minor inaccuracies and inconsistencies.

When we work with these versions, we have the feeling of making direct contact -- as close as is possible for those who understand only English -- with the actual words of the Spirit. And with the aid of concordances and other helps we are able to check and compare the use of various words as they are used throughout Scripture, for these versions are as far as is possible, true word-for-word translations, with a minimum of man's own presumptuous rewording and interpretation.

But when we read any modern version, we immediately have the feeling of seeing God's Word very vaguely and obscurely and distortedly through a thick blanket of human, usually irreverent interpretation.

Truly, such versions are very smooth and easy and pleasant to read, and simple to understand. They facilely solve all the intricate problems of meaning presented by the heavy and more cumbersome language of the Authorized Version which, being more literal, follows more closely the Hebrew form of thought.

But are we, in the modern versions, getting the TRUE solutions, or just being sidetracked from them by someone's meaningless and arbitrary simplification of problems we ourselves should be studying and facing and pondering and searching out?

The Word of God demands personal, devoted study -- consistent, persevering, time-consuming study. If we do not value it enough to do this, then we do not really love God, or want eternal life.

The book of Proverbs is divided into more or less distinct parts, which vary in number according to the degree we subdivide it. The simplest and most obvious subdivision, clearly defined in the book, gives four --

The Proverbs of Solomon (1-24).

The Proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah copied out (25-29).

The words of Agur (30).

The words of Lemuel (31).

Who these latter two -- Agur and Lemuel -- were, we have no way of knowing. They are either symbolic names for Solomon, which seems unlikely and strained, or they are men of whom we know nothing as to time, place, and circumstances. Agur means "collector," and Lemuel, "devoted to God."

Lemuel was a king, so if he was a real person other than Solomon, he must have been a Gentile, for there were no Hebrew kings so named. This would be a fitting conclusion to such a book for all times.

When we think of how Melchizedek, king of Salem in the time of Abraham, so briefly appears and so quickly disappears from the record, and yet is of so great significance in the divine plan, and leaves the indelible mark of the eternal Melchizedek priesthood -- when we think of such, we realize how infinitely little we really know of the historical details of the development of God's purpose through the ages.

There is room for Agur and King Lemuel and thousands of others equally distinguished in their day, all of whom some day we hope to meet and know.

The first parts-chapters 1-24 -- again divides into three parts --

Chapters 1-9: Introduction -- continuous narrative, personally addressed to "My son" in exhortation and in praise of wisdom.

Chapters 10-22: A collection of several hundred separate, unrelated, two-line proverbs.

Chapters 23-24: Conclusion -- return to the personal and continuous narrative form.

## **CHAPTER 1**

The first six verses state the purpose of the book. This book is given to us by God to teach us how to conduct ourselves in all daily activities. It is worthy of all the time and effort we can give it.

Our salvation could well depend on how faithfully we seek to learn and absorb and PRACTICE its divine wisdom --

"The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel";

"To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding":

"To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity";

"To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion";

"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding will attain unto wise counsels":

"To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings" (Prov. 1: 1-6).

None will attain to the Kingdom of God who have not done ALL they can to prepare and qualify themselves for it. This, and this alone, is the only reason we are given the great gift and privilege of life in the first place. We DARE not get sidetracked into anything passing and temporal.

"How can we escape (from sin and death) if we NEGLECT so great salvation?"

Verse 7, which is repeated again at the end of this introductory section (9:10), gives the heart of all the teaching -- the great dividing line, the glorious threshold of wisdom --

"The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge."

Verses 10-19 contain a strong exhortation and warning to keep completely separate from sinners -- not to be drawn into any company that is not godly.

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov. 13:20).

Verses 20 to the end, is the appeal of Wisdom to the sons of men to follow the ways of godliness and joy, and a solemn warning against the fatal folly of rejecting God's gracious call.

## **CHAPTER 2**

Chapter 2 begins with an admonition to apply intense and consistent effort to acquire the divine wisdom that leads to life, just as keenly and persistently as men seek for hid treasure.

It promises that those who seek shall be given the great joy and comfort of wisdom from God, that will keep them from the ways of death. The chapter ends with the promise of the Kingdom --

"For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it."

"But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it."

## **CHAPTER 3**

Chapter 3 is a further powerful exhortation, and proclamation of the beauty and joy of wisdom's way --

"Let not Mercy and Truth forsake thee" (3:3).

This is the heart of the Gospel of Life. We must have, and manifest, both --

Mercy AND Truth;

Love AND Knowledge;

Graciousness AND sound doctrine;

Kindness AND undeviating firmness;

Verses 5-6 re-emphasize the key message of life --

"Trust in the Lord with ALL thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding."

"In ALL thy ways acknowledge Him, and He SHALL direct thy paths."

Let us repeat this over and over to ourselves. And let us really believe it.

But it must be ALL -- or it will not work.

Verse 11 is quoted by Paul as Scripture, in Heb. 12 --

"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; nor be weary of His correction."

## **CHAPTER 4**

Chapter 4:1-7 is another urgent plea to seek wisdom, summed up in verse 7 --

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

Do we fully realize this is addressed to us? -- that WE are the ones in urgent need of making the pursuit of life-giving divine wisdom the single concern of our lives?

It is so easy to read all this over and over without ever perceiving its present, direct, and pressing bearing upon OURSELVES. Unless we awake, and make the personal application, all these beautiful, divine words will do nothing for us except to condemn us.

In our natural state we have NO wisdom. In our natural state we are silly, shallow, fleshly, and foolish, like all the rest of mankind, and we STAY that way unless God's Word changes us. God has no use for such. "God hath no pleasure in fools."

Therefore, the Proverbs make repeated, intense efforts to get us to realize the urgency of these things -- to realize that we have no time to waste, that we must put aside all else and

devote ourselves to God's Word and work, that there is no hope or promise for any who neglect this or get sidetracked into the meaningless things of this life.

Verses 14-19: Another warning on association with the ungodly --

"Avoid it; pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away!" (15).

It sounds like someone -- seeing a very terrible danger -- striving frantically to warn one who is stumbling blindly into it.

Verse 18 is the beautiful and refreshing contrast, that of which surely we all see the joyfulness and desirability --

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Why shouldn't that be us? It very easily can be -- IF we want it more than anything else, and are prepared to give up everything else for it. It is up to us to decide what we really want.

Is our way of life constantly IMPROVING -- constantly getting more godly, deeper in divine wisdom, more and more thankfully joyful, a fuller and fuller sense of purpose and meaning and hope for the future -- "SHINING MORE AND MORE unto the perfect day?"

If it is not, we are not really living at all, and -- sadder still -- we are not in the way of future life. The proverbs agonize to awake us to the wisdom of Wisdom -- to the wisdom of dropping everything else and making these things ours, in the so brief time that our little span encompasses.

Verses 20-27: Once again the exhortation to an unswerving devotion to wisdom and uprightness -- a straight forward path -- a single, all-consuming goal, summed up in verse 25 --

"Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee."

The only way to reach our goal of eternal life is to keep the eye ever fixed upon it unswervingly, and continually press forward, as Paul says --

"Forgetting the things behind"

-- the things we cast aside when we accept Christ, the advantages and pleasures and honors of the world that Paul rejected and cast aside as dung, that he might win Christ --

". . . and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

If we allow ourselves to be weighted down and sidetracked by present things, we shall lose the race of life.

## **CHAPTER 5**



The strange woman: while this truly has a literal basis, and is a necessary exhortation because of the natural tendencies and foolishness and lust of the flesh, the principal lesson is broader and deeper.

The strange woman is Folly personified, just as Wisdom is so beautifully personified in chapter 8.

The heart of the warning, on which we should think very deeply, is in verses 11-12 --

"And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed,"

"And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof."

This time of closing the accounts of life comes inevitably to all, and how unbelievably soon it seems to come!

In youth, life seems to stretch out endlessly before us, with all its glitter and attraction; but how soon it is all over, and wise indeed are they who early face this universal fact!

## **CHAPTER 6**

-- becomes more specific as to detail. Verses 1-5 give warning against committing and obligating ourselves. No one can foresee the future. The useful soldier of God is the one unencumbered (2 Tim. 2:4) --

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life: that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

It is so easy to thoughtlessly put burdens on our backs and ropes around our necks that will hinder us in the way of life. Here is a first principle of wisdom. Here again is the dividing line between fools and wise.

Verses 6-11: An exhortation to diligence and labor -- against indolence and slumber. Slumber is more than just lying in bed. It is mental drifting and inactivity -- spiritual laziness -- natural self-indulgence and self-pleasing (Rom. 13:11-12) --

"It is high time to awake out of sleep ... cast off the works of darkness ... put on the armor of light."

"Many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Cor. 11:30).

And verse 6 of this chapter 6 --

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard! Consider her ways, and be wise!"

We are placed here for worthwhile activity and WORK. The purpose of our life is to serve God in joy and enthusiasm to the fullest limit of our mortal powers, as a training for future eternal service in the tireless powers of the divine nature.

This alone is true living. Indolent self-pleasing is death --

"She (or he) that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6).

But (1 Cor. 15:58) --

"ALWAYS ABOUNDING in the work of the Lord."

-- is the joyful, purposeful, satisfying ideal of true living.

Verses 16-19 give seven basic, fleshly things to avoid if we desire life -- things that are an abomination to God. They are --

1. Pride.

2. Falsehood: lying, deception, misrepresentation of any kind.

God demands utter TRUTH in the "inward parts" -- rigid integrity in the deepest well-springs of motive and intention -- regardless of consequence, which is the very opposite of natural, shifty human nature.

3. Doing anything injurious to others.

4. Planning to do wrong.

Planning sin is in some ways more vicious than the sin itself.

5. Eagerness to seek trouble and think evil.

6. Misrepresenting the motives and actions of others.

And above all -- worst of all --

7. Seeking to create discord and conflict among brethren.

What terrible judgment is in store for such! And yet what a common, thoughtless fault it is!

All these things are the natural motions of the flesh, and will manifest themselves naturally in us all, unless honestly faced and rooted out -- especially the last.

So much is said with the secret (though never admitted, even to ourself) purpose of causing one person to be estranged from, or offended by, or think less of, another.

This is such an ingrained characteristic of the flesh that we are all guilty. It is so satisfying to the pride of the flesh to criticize and think evil. And this is the crowning abomination in the sight of God, but -- "Love covers a multitude of sins."

## **CHAPTER 7**

Chapter 7 is again the parable of the young fool and the strange woman -- all the deadly, worldly enticements of folly and sin.

## **CHAPTER 8**

Then chapter 8 -- the direct and glorious contrast -- the personification of Wisdom as the beautiful, faithful, eternal companion and handmaid of God --

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His Works of old" (v. 22).

"When He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment":

"When He appointed the foundations of the earth":

"Then was I by Him, as one brought up with Him":

"I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (vs. 29-30).

The final verse of chapter 8 expresses a principle that is so simple and obvious and self-evident, and yet so ignored.

If we could only fully receive it as a deep, fixed mainspring of conviction and action, then anything contrary to the will of God would not only be repulsive to us but impossible --

"He that sinneth against me -- Divine Wisdom -- wrongeth his own soul. ALL THEY THAT HATE ME LOVE DEATH."

## **CHAPTER 9**

Chapter 9 concludes this introduction of strong personal exhortation and warning, and again repeats life's cardinal principle --

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding" (v. 10).

## **CHAPTERS 10-24**

Chapter 10 begins the actual Proverbs themselves, with the introduction in verse 1, "The Proverbs of Solomon." Each verse is a separate thought in two parts -- either a contrast or an amplification. This continues through 22:16.

When we read the Proverbs, we should pause and take them one by one. It is not a reading that can be read as a narrative. It is worse than useless to just skim through them, because we are just going through a form of meaningless, self-satisfying motions, deceiving ourselves.

We should seek prayerfully to understand each one, and get its lesson, before passing on to the next. And even more importantly, we should examine ourselves in the light of each -- force ourselves to answer specifically: Do we, or do we not, live according to this command of God? And if not, what do we expect at life's end?

We must approach them with an open mind, desiring to learn something new, seeking the wisdom that is from above -- casting out our natural "wisdom," the clever, foolish way of the world, and replacing it with the Spirit's real, life-giving wisdom.

Verse 17 of chapter 22 reverts to the introductory style of continuous, personal exhortation

"Hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge." Verse 24 is especially striking --

"Make no friendship with an angry man."

Self control is the essence of wisdom. Those who do not intelligently face, and discern, and CONTROL the natural manifestations of their fleshly feelings have never grown up.

They are mentally and spiritually infantile; and are dangerous, undependable, sorrow-bringing companions.

This section, the conclusion of the primary book, continues to the end of chapter 24. Verse 9 of chapter 24 again draws our attention to the basic theme of Proverbs -- that SIN IS FOOLISHNESS, AND FOOLISHNESS IS SIN --

"The thought of foolishness is sin."

The Proverbs glorify Wisdom -- serious, intelligent, Spirit-guided thoughtfulness and soberness; and constantly warn against, and condemn, the empty, babbling, childish foolishness of the natural mind.

## **CHAPTERS 25-29**

A completely new portion:

"The proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out."

This section -- chapters 25-29 -- is basically similar to the main part of the primary book.

It is very interesting to learn that this was part of the activity of Hezekiah in his desire to serve God and provide guidance for God's people. It fits very well into the picture we are given concerning him; and as a result of his efforts we are blessed with a further revelation of the will of God.

## **CHAPTER 30**

Chapter 30 is by Agur, and is especially outstanding -- vivid and animated and expressive throughout. It contains some of the best-remembered proverbs. It is arranged in six sets of fours:

First, the four evil characteristics of the proud and wicked generation (vs. 11-14) --

1. Despising parents;
2. Pure and right in their own eyes;
3. Lifted up with pride and self-esteem;
4. Voracious and rapacious in their greedy and debased pleasure-seeking.

-- so strikingly like Paul's picture of the conditions of the generation of the final Gentile days; and strikingly similar to the conditions we increasingly see around us today.

Then the four things that never say, "It is enough":

-- the lesson of the unsatisfiability of desire;

The four things too wonderful to understand:

-- the lesson of the unfathomableness of God's ways;

The four that earth cannot bear:

-- the lesson of the repulsiveness of pride;

The four things little and weak, but exceeding wise:

-- the lesson of industriousness and prudence, and building on the strength of God,

And the four things that are comely in their going:

-- the lesson of the beauty and power of a steadfast and fearless going straightforward in faith.

## **CHAPTER 31**

Chapter 31, the final chapter, is by King Lemuel -- the Wisdom that his mother taught him. First, three instructions for kings --

1. Give not thy strength unto women;
2. It is not for kings to drink wine; and
3. Devote yourself to the poor.

-- all true and important in their literal application; but clearly, in this final summing up of the book -- this divine instruction for kings -- the principal meaning is the spiritual.

The warning is for all who hope to be kings of righteousness, against the False Women of the Apostasy, and against folly and Evil in general; and the intoxicating wine of both false doctrine and self-indulgence; and against pride.

As to the devotion to the poor and needy, Paul's words in 1st Corinthians 1:26-28 are clear:

"Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the weak and base and despised."

And Jesus' words --

"He anointed me to preach the Gospel to the POOR."

A current Canadian school book of history says --

"The earliest conversions were made among the humble and down-trodden -- slaves, poor city-workers, women.

"By the second century, Christianity penetrated the middle and upper classes.

"Justin Martyr set about proving Christianity and Greek philosophy were not incompatible."

We know what happened to Christianity after that. There is much food for thought in these quotations and historical facts, and a very sad lesson for today.

The book of Proverbs closes with the portrayal of the Virtuous Woman, whose price is far above rubies -- a beautiful and fitting conclusion to this most unique and remarkable book of divine wisdom.

This final portion is an acrostic of 22 verses, each of which begins with a different Hebrew letter in alphabetical order, like Lamentations, Psalm 119, and other portions of Scripture.

Again, its literal application is truly important, but its application to the glorious Bride of Christ in all her love inspired virtue and holiness is clear and unmistakable, and as such its lessons and warnings should be carefully studied by all --

"Strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come" (v. 25).

As in Psalm 45 --

"The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold."

"She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (v. 26).

Wisdom and kindness. Let us make sure that ALL we say passes these two divine tests, for otherwise we are not of the Bride of Christ --

"By thy words thou shalt be justified; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

"A woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised" (v. 30).

Thus, the book of Proverbs closes as it began --

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

And so closes the other Wisdom book, Ecclesiastes:

"Fear God, and keep His commandments."

"Give her of the fruit of her hands: and let her own works praise her" (v. 31).

The final blessing and reward:

"Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every one according as his works shall be."

(Taken from “Be Ye Transformed” Volume 1 pages 209-223 by Bro. G. Growcott)