

sues of life. "Right thoughts lead to right actions."

**20. Winebibbers.** Those who of purpose intoxicate themselves. **Riotous eaters of flesh.** Gluttons. Banquets in the East were often prepared for on the plan of our modern picnics, each participant bringing his own contribution of food and drink. Consequently there was a rivalry which often led to excess. This verse is a prohibition of all actions which make indulgence of appetite the end rather than the means to help. Meat is a rare article of diet in the East, and when it is indulged in is often indulged in to an extreme, so that a meat dinner and a riotous feast might become almost synonymous terms.

**21. The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty.** As true in A. D. 1896 as in

B. C. 1000. **Drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.** Luxury tends to excess, excess to idleness, idleness to poverty.

**22.** A verse that needs to be practiced upon, rather than commented upon.

**23. Buy the truth, and sell it not.** No price is too great to expend for truth. No price is great enough to accept for it. **Also.** Should be omitted. **Wisdom.** Practical knowledge. **Instruction.** Moral culture and discipline. **Understanding.** The faculty of discernment.

**24.** The two members of this verse tell the same story. It is a poetic repetition.

**25. She that bare thee.** This matches with verse 22, "He that begat thee," and a repetition of the perennial truth that wise and good children are the profoundest source of joy to their parents.

### CRITICAL NOTES.

This is a temperance lesson. Though verses 29-33 are not included, they should be read by every scholar. The chapter was written way back in the ages when liquor was purer and less injurious, if not less intoxicating; when the habit of drinking was almost universal; when it was regarded with more favor than in our day. Indeed, it is doubtful whether total abstinence was at all practiced in those days, except by the very few; or whether our author intended to condemn anything but excessive drinking. Be that as it may, our duty is clear. Whether Solomon or other Old Testament characters used wine or not is of comparative unimportance to us. An age or man that would tolerate polygamy is no standard for us on the liquor question. Let no one waste time in discussing the two-wine theory; it is a question which will not be settled in a Sunday school class. Men became intoxicated in Bible times; for this they were denounced. A total abstainer can never become intoxicated, will never get drunk; therefore, if we want to be perfectly safe, let us be total abstainers. Even though, with moderate drinking, we might be strong enough to remain sober for eighty years, let us for the sake of the vast majority abstain from the accursed stuff which has caused, and is still causing, more misery than war, famine, and pestilence combined.

**Verse 15. My son.** This was the usual way of addressing a pupil. Here, however, as in other passages, the father might have been the teacher and his son the pupil. **Thine heart.** Hebrew psychology differed from our own, for according to the former the heart, not the brain, was the seat of the intellect or knowledge (Deut. 29. 4), of the understanding (Isa. 32. 4), and of thinking in general (Gen. 17. 17). The sentiment is: "The son who will act according to reason will not only be happy himself, but will render his parents happy also." What heartlessness, bordering upon insanity, must pos-

sess a boy intent upon doing what he knows will not only ruin him, but utterly destroy the peace of those he should obey and love. What an array of fathers and mothers this day suffer untold agonies on account of the intemperance of the boy.

**16. My reins shall rejoice.** "Reins" is an old word for kidneys, the most concealed organs of the body, so surrounded with fatty substances as to be entirely out of sight; therefore naturally regarded as the seat of feeling and longing (Job 19. 27), and especially of desire and passion (Psalm 16. 7). **When thy lips speak right things.** "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12. 34). No stream can be pure when the source is impure (James 3. 11). Therefore take care of the heart.

**17. Let not thine heart envy sinners.** Desire not to be like those who are openly or secretly transgressing the law of God in order to attain wealth, reputation, promotion, luxury, or ease. Those addicted to the use of liquors seem to have much enjoyment; but, after all, what people on earth have or cause so much sorrow? (See verses 29, ff.) **In the fear of the Lord.** In the enjoyment of the religion of Jehovah, who offers one incessant feast to all who may come. It will be noticed that there is only one verb in this verse. *The be thou* of our version is not in the Hebrew. For that reason the following rendering has been proposed: "Let not thy heart press on eagerly after sinners, but much rather after the fear of Jehovah all the time."

**18. There is a reward.** "Reward" is not a literal rendering. *Acharith*, so translated, denotes "issue" or "future." The idea, therefore, is that there is to be an end to the prosperity of the wicked and to the calamities of the righteous. Some, however, have seen in this passage at least a hint at the doctrine of rewards and punishment in a future life. **Thy hope shall not be cut off.** Hope of