

## Lessons from Proverbs (II)

Proverbs 21:26; 22:9, 16, 22-23

- I. These are basic messages on social ethics. In Proverbs 21:2, righteousness is defined by giving and not holding back; wickedness is defined by covetousness.
- II. The principle is that God is the original giver of life, God is the origin of giving. In creating the world, God gave of Himself, of His love, His creativity, His intelligence, His energy, His heart, His personality. (This can be expanded.)
- III. Therefore, when we give we are a little like God. We are exercising our divine nature; we are becoming children of God.
- IV. In the material world, giving is the foundation for life, for prosperity, for happiness, because it is the basic principle of creation, it is the principle through which all things come to be and come to relate with each other. Therefore, giving will bring prosperity, and giving is righteousness.
- V. Then what is the fall? It is the entrance of selfishness into the world. The serpent tempted Eve to take something for herself; she tempted Adam in the same way. Ever since then, fallen people have valued their own lives, their own possessions, above others'. The problem is not simply having things (i.e., private property); the problem is being self about it, taking that which is not rightfully ours, keeping things which should be shared.
- VI. Giving is no the only basis for material prosperity, according to Proverbs, but it is rewarded with blessedness (Proverbs 22:9).
- VII. What of oppression of the poor? Being selfish inevitably leads to oppression of others, keeping prosperity from others, trampling the poor. Proverbs 22:16 says that oppressing the poor is not only morally evil, but it will eventually lead to disaster for oneself. Thus if America, the wealthy land, does not give to the poor nations, eventually America will come to disaster. For the wealth is not given to this nation for its own benefit, but for the benefit of the world. And the same lesson for the wealthy versus the poor in this nation.
- VIII. Once more, it is the Lord who guarantees this. The Lord will weak the destruction upon the selfish. Two lessons here: the Lord is on the side of the poor against their oppressors; vengeance is the Lord's; if it I taken by the poor into their own hands it can lead to further evil. The key point is to trust in the will of God, to pray to God for deliverance.