



12 I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. 13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. 14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. 15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. 16 By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. 17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. 18 Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. 19 My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. 20 I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: 21 That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures. (Prov 8:12-21)

The quality of Wisdom is an inherent feature of its nature. If we are to become wise, it must not be through reading or experience only. It must become a part of our beings – an innate part of our own nature. God's Word is not superficial, but a value to be internalized in the heart through study, meditation and longing for that Word daily. As we digest that Word, it enters into our bloodstream of life and is delivered to every cell of our person. It then is part of who we are. But if the blood flow is topped, so does the life. There is only one source of invention – God Almighty. When our beloved country was founded upon Godly principles by Godly men, she was imbued with the Wisdom that attends all Godly people. Inventions of every sort flourished in our land and far exceeded those in other lands. It was not because we were a more intelligent or better people than others, but we had God as our Teacher and Guide. That makes all the difference.

12 I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. Prudence is the outward expression of inward Wisdom. The word derives from the Latin *prudencia* which in turn derives from *providentia*. So Prudence is the certain evidence of acting according to the Guidance or Providence of God. Is our citizenry wise today? Not nearly so much as in times past. I have a Federal Reserve note on my desk (an old dollar bill) which has a notation reading, "Redeemable in REAL money at any Federal Reserve Bank." What that meant was that I could take the paper dollar note to a Federal Reserve Bank and get the face value issued in silver. That is the definition of REAL money. It is based on a concrete and physical value. The currency we have today is worth only what the merchant says it is worth. Its value is not stable. In times past, the American people worked hard and saved what little they could – no longer! We are into every sort of lurid past time and pleasure. Popular models, movie stars, and

musicians are viewed with a far higher regard than soldiers who go into battle to protect our freedoms.

How did our values become so lopsided? LIN Yutang, a Christian philosopher, and son of a Christian minister, from Fujian, China, wrote: "*We do not know a nation until we know its pleasures of life, just as we do not know man until we know how he spends his leisure. It is when a man ceases to do the things he has to do, and does the things that he likes to do, that the character is revealed. It is when the repressions of society and business are gone and when the goads of money and fame and ambition are lifted, and man's spirit wanders where it listeth, that we see the inner man, his real self.*" Based on that profound statement and wise observation, I suppose our Founding Fathers would find no resemblance in modern America and the Beautiful America which they founded.

13 The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. Every building needs a foundation. What is the foundation of Wisdom? *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.* (Psalms 111:10) I hope the reader, after reading my not-so-well-written devotions, will begin to see in at least those Scripture passages that I have quoted a complete cohesiveness and continuity in God's Word. Every part of His Truth is in accord with every other part. It is for that reason that I love to quote cross sections of Scripture to bear out that beautiful and amazing feature of God's Word. It is the FEAR of the Lord that is the BEGINNING, but not the END, of Wisdom. When we have come to the realization that we are shameful sinners, unworthy to touch the hem-line of Christ, then we begin to fear the wrath of God for our disobedience of His Commandments. Morality is a component part of Wisdom. That initial fear should naturally lead us into an intense inquiry of the remedy in God's Word. When we know and love God, we will hate those things that He hates. His friends will be our friends, and His enemies will be our enemies. *Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord.* (2 Chron 19:2) Pride and arrogance hates everything that does not lift it up. How can we truly love little children on forlorn streets if we feel that we are so much better than them? God loves them!

14 Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. Even a little child, wielding the weapon of Wisdom, can put the scholars to shame. The point is this: Wisdom does not consider the strength of its possessor, but it gives ALL strength to those who get it. The only counsel that is of worth comes from Wisdom. We do not run in our distresses to fools for answers, do we? Wisdom does not teach us blindly, but provides understanding to buttress the wise principles she has taught.

15 By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. The mountains are rich in Wisdom, but so are the valleys. Even those who know not the Author of Wisdom profit from its possession. **16 By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.** There is a worldly wisdom that does not approach the supreme value of Godly Wisdom. The wisdom of the world uses intrigues and subterfuge to gain advantage, but the advantage is temporary. True Wisdom exalts a people and nation without fear of reversal.

17 I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Wisdom has a strong affinity to those who love and seek her. My heart is broken at the difficulty many older Christians have at understanding truly God's Word. They have been under false preaching and teaching so very long that their minds are set in the wrong way. So

they suffer a lesser blessing than if they had confirmed the promises of God long ago while sitting on the river bank as a child. Yes, hear the sermon, but confirm all things spoken from the pulpit by the Word of God. That way, we cannot easily be led astray. A fundamental principle of learning is Primacy. That which we learn first is most enduring. If that first learning is error, it will be hard to clear our minds of it. *1 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; 2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* (Psalms 63:1-2)

18 Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. In many under-developed nations, the income of the people may be less than 10% of that in America; yet, in some of those nations, the average personal savings exceed that of those in America. Amazing, isn't it. Wise handling of our resources leads to wealth and honor. But material wealth is fleeting and unsure; however, Wisdom is durable – it last not only through this life, but escorts us into the life to come. The truly wise person will also be a righteous person – "*honesty is the best policy*" (Aesop) was the clarion call of American honor for the first one and half centuries of our Independence. When we compare the character and honor of Washington, Jefferson, and Patrick Henry with that evidenced in modern Washington, we are bewildered at the difference.

19 My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. What are the fruits of Wisdom? Does your fear and worry of being found out in a sultry sin keep you awake at night? Did you spend your last check in one day out of desire for that which you could not afford, and have no money left to cover essential obligations? Is your heart heavy with guilt that paralyzes your ability to serve God and man? A clear conscience will afford a night of sound and restful sleep. An honest heart will forestay our looking constantly over our shoulders to insure that our deceitful intrigues do not catch up. A mind of righteousness will enable us to look straight into the eyes of our friends without reservation or guilt. Those are riches that endure. They even extend our lives physically. Gold and silver cannot buy peace of mind – Wisdom can and will do so. This is why Wisdom is referred to as a "Tree of Life" in Proverbs 3:18. But man always seems, as did Eve and Adam, to choose the wrong fruit from the wrong tree.

20 I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment. The way of Righteousness is that same Way to which our Lord made reference as the **NARROW WAY that leadeth unto life.**" You inquire as to the WAY? Search out the Scriptures. The directions and counsel given there on the Righteous Way are abundant. No man needs to wonder of it. Wisdom always coincides with Righteousness. In fact, Wisdom is already on that Path of Righteousness – not on the right or left side of the Path, but in the very CENTER of it. "*Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end;*" (Psalms 119:33) and *Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk*" (Psalm 143:8) Isaiah describes the way and the answer to finding it: "*Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*" (Isaiah 30:21) But the world is dark and dreary. Where shall we find Light for our path? *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* (Psalms 119:105) Do we not love that good and classic hymn, *Lead Kindly Light*?

Lead Kindly Light

Lead, kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom, lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home; lead Thou me on!

Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now lead Thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years!

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still will lead me on.
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till the night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile, which I
Have loved long since, and lost awhile!

Meantime, along the narrow rugged path, Thyself hast trod,
Lead, Savior, lead me home in childlike faith, home to my God.
To rest forever after earthly strife
In the calm light of everlasting life.

What a better or brighter or more enduring light than that inextinguishable Light of Christ to guide us always? The last verse of today's text seals the whole: ***21 That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.*** Riches and treasures that the unlighted eye cannot comprehend await those who walk in the Wisdom of the Lord. The key to this consummation of Wisdom is not the first precedent of fear, but LOVE! It is not possible to love Wisdom and fail to love God, for Wisdom is the Mind of God in action. That which we love we can never reject. If we LOVE truly, we cannot disobey that love by acting contrary to its nature. That new Commandment that Jesus gave is not new after all, but old as the Heavens. "***Love one another as I have loved you!***" That is a love that can only originate in the heart of God, and that is the love we claim.