



1 A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke. 2 A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence. 3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction. 4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. 5 A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame. 6 Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner. 7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches. 8 The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke. 9 The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out. (Prov 13:1-9)

NOTE:

Before beginning to study this devotion today, have you remembered to pray for God's Light and Understanding? – just asking. If you desire the lovely bud of truth to open into the brilliant beauty of the rose, our studies must be watered by the morning dews of prayer. The language of God is cloaked in the majesty and beauty of His exalted vocabulary. Though some modern Bibles would attempt to bring His words down to the street level of the vulgar, absolute truth is preserved in reverence and a meticulous regard for the beauty of His Words and Expressions without human amendment. If we were to change the words of Shakespeare to the vulgar language of the street, how many lovers of literature would condemn us out of hand? *"To be, or not to be – that is the question"* could be rendered as *"The issue is whether we should exist, or go into oblivion"*. Which has more meaning, clarity and beauty?

The 13th chapter of Proverbs may be broken down into three primary divisions: 1) Correction or Rebellion vs. 13:1; 2) Godly Control or careless living, vs. 13:2-4; and 3) Consequences of a righteous lifestyle are rewards, but that of a slovenly sinner is extinction, vs. 13:5-25. We shall address the first two categories in Part I, and the remaining in Part II.

According to Newton's First Law of Motion, *a body at rest tends to remain at rest, and a body in motion tends to remain in motion, unless acted upon by an outside force*. There is an amazing parallel between the natural law that God has instilled in all of the physical Creation and the spiritual Laws with which He has imbued the souls of men. Every righteous act invokes a corresponding blessing, and every wicked act provokes a corresponding curse. Even sins forgiven leave scars that would not otherwise exist. It is for this reason that we are admonished to seek the Lord early – long before the

gravitational pull of sin gains the ascendancy each day.

There are two responses to Godly correction, and two contrasting results. **1 A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.** To hear the voice on one's father implies an obedience to that voice. Hearing the Voice of our Heavenly Father brings us into obedience to the full implications of the 5th Commandment to "*honour thy Father and thy Mother.*" Our foremost Father is not our natural and worldly fathers, but our Father in Heaven. Hearing and obeying His Voice is expected of a son or daughter, but the voice of instruction to the wise child is the same as a rebuke to the one who scorns that Voice.

Since it is the treasures of the heart that emerge from one's mouth, the righteous person creates goodness by the very words he speaks out of that treasure of goodness. **2 A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence.** Because the treasures of the heart of the transgressor is wickedness, he only has wickedness upon which to draw his check. ***A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*** (Matt 12:35) Every day we make deposits to our hearts. What deposits have you made today - good or bad?

3 He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction. In a sense, our tongue is our judge because it represents what is in our hearts - and what is **NOT** in our hearts. The tongue turns out to be the most powerful organ at our command. Please note the beautiful imagery provided by St. James: ***2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. 3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.*** (James 3:2-6) So we might say that we are "condemned by the words of our own mouth.

4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. Desires of every type, except righteous ones, rule in the heart of the sluggard. He labors for nothing, but pines for the increase of the labors of others who are diligent. He owns nothing outright. That which he has is gotten by other means. The diligent only has possessions that truly belong to him for he has labored by the sweat of his brow to acquire them. The word 'fat' is not physically attributed, but figurative of the wealth of possessions that the diligent shall acquire - not just in worldly possessions, but heavenly, too.

5 A righteous man hateth lying: but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame. A virtuous woman, and a righteous man, may let a small lie slip from his lips out of an old habit derived from the former man; but the man or woman will feel remorse when they realize that they have told a lie. Hating the lie, they are saddened at the awareness that they have been the progenitors of the lie. They will repent and seek forgiveness for their unintentional indiscretion. The wicked man, au contraire, feels no remorse whatsoever at his lying tongue. It is his way of life. His sins are habitual and enormous, born out of intent and not out of indiscretion. There is no gold or silver to back his currency in words. His word is as worthless as a wooden nickel. When proof is

demanding of his lies, he is put to shame time after time.

There is complete order throughout the Universe. The stars of heaven adhere strictly to the orbits into which the finger of God has flung them. The stars and other heavenly bodies have a predetermined path in which to travel. There are some exceptions to this fact such as meteors and comets. These are wandering stars with no fixed orbit. They are destined, at some given point unknown to nature's law, to collide with an immense star and be burned to cinders, or to be swallowed up in the humongous gravitational field of a black hole and be crushed to a tiny grain of sand. Many professing Christians appear as a bright star but are, in fact, only wandering stars with no predetermined path to follow. The orbit of God's law does not appeal to them though they prefer to be called a star. **6 Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.** It is not God that condemns to Hell, but our own sins. The Way of God is a way that is lawful before God. The wicked, in truth, have no way, for their path is unrestricted by any righteous intent. Like the meteor (wandering star), they will be consumed in a fiery ball as they approach the atmosphere of Heaven.

Do you ever wonder why good and Godly churches seem to be poorer, materially, than the rich mainstream churches? There may be several answers to that question, but one prominent one may be that the poorer churches do not exist to hoard wealth - they share all that they have with the poor and underprivileged. The large and wealthy churches take great care to pay a handsome salary to their staff before handing crumbs left over to the destitute and poor beneath the Master's Table. Jesus Christ, through St John the Revelator, gives us a hint of the truth: ***And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.*** (Rev 2:8-9) That which the world regards as wealth may not be so, and that which the world regards as poverty may indeed be great riches with God. **7 There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.** This verse in Proverbs makes much more sense now that we have compared it with the Mind of Christ, does it not?

Riches save some from punishment, while others suffer because they will not heed the rebuke of the slothful, which makes and keeps them poor. Do we not see the reality of this in our own modern America. Politics is money, and not honor, today. **8 The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor heareth not rebuke.** To many wealthy people, the only worth they can claim is worldly and transient. But the poor need not fear rebuke for ill-gotten gain. "*Many a gem of purest ray serene, the dark unfathomed depths of ocean bear; Many a flower is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air.*" Ellegy, by Thomas Gray.

What light has the righteous? Well, they only have the light given them by Christ - the Light of the World. The light which we show to others is merely that reflected light of our glorious Sun - our Lord. Forgive me, but I **LOVE** the symbolism God gives us of Christ as the Light. ***But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.*** (Mal 4:2) ***We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day stars arise in your hearts.*** (2 Peter 1:19) We also have the Light of Christ to guide us during the hours of darkness of the night: " . . . ***I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*** (Rev 22:16) So we may now better understand the Author

of Proverbs when he says: 9 *The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.* The Light of the righteous is inextinguishable, because the Light of the Righteous is Christ! A lamp with no light is as useful as a ship with no sea. Though the lamps of the wicked are dark, even what little light they may have shall be put out when they go to their "long home." "...*because man goeth to his long home*" (Eccl 12:5)

Perhaps we should regularly examine our souls to see if we are stars of heaven, or wandering stars destined for destruction: if we have the true Light of Christ (fueled by the Holy Ghost), or do we possess only darkened lamps without the oil of the Holy Ghost to produce Light?