



1 Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife. 2 A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren. 3 The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts. 4 A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue. 5 Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished. 6 Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers. 7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince. 8 A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth. 9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends. 10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool. 11 An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him. 12 Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly. 13 Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house. 14 The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with (Prov 17:1-14)

It is very evident that riches with turmoil is not a very pleasant way to live. Oftentimes, men are pleased to live in misery as long as they can have wealth at any cost. If wealth does not bring comfort and peace, of what good is it. We have all seen rich men who horde their wealth and live like paupers. They later die as paupers and leave all the wealth they have hoarded. So what was the good of it? ***1 Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.*** This verse has direct relationship to another: ***It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.*** (Prov 21:9) It is not likely that the brawling woman always attends wealth, but the circumstances of misery she creates often does. Of course, there remains another value of quietness that is often overlooked, especially in prayer. We make our petitions to God in a laundry-list format, and do not hang

around in quietness to hear his response. "*Be still and know that I am God*" He counsels. (Ps 46:10a)

2 *A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.* The pride of a father for his son is that the son carry on the good name and reputation of the father. If the son fails by bringing shame and disrepute upon the father's house, the father will less view him as a son than a hired hand who is industrious and honorable. The offspring of a duck should swim and quack like a duck. That hired hand will take most of the position of the son and shall be treated as a son. Sonship with God is not based on the DNA of our blood, but the makeup of our hearts and souls.

3 *The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.* All things considered of great value must be tested for purity. Both gold and silver have a worth that is intrinsic to their natures. These two metals have other values as well for uses in manufacturing and medicine. It is man's option as to what values other than intrinsic the two metals possess. But the innate and intrinsic value is assigned by God. The same is true of humankind. Our worth as laborers or professionals is acquired through external factors, but God looks upon the heart to assess our value. Both gold and silver are found in the natural state alloyed or mixed with other elements. Neither gold or silver are worth much when they are less than pure. The Refiner must heat the gold or silver as much as seven times to separate the dross from the pure metals. This is a trying time, but the end result enhances the product metal many times over. So do trials in this life enhance our value to God and our fellow men. As God refines our natures (sanctification) the old stubborn and sinful habits gradually fall away and the sterling character shines through. The central point is that we must all be tried and refined constantly in this life as we grow ever nearer in faith and love to Christ. If there ever was such a process as the elusive alchemy of the centuries past, that would be God who changes the nature of lead into gold.

4 *A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.* Why is it that the man of wicked behavior and a man of a lying tongue both give heed to false counsel and lies? It is because they are of the same nature. Like natures attract just as magnets of the same metal attract. *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* (John 12:32) When we are born anew of the Spirit, our basic natures are changed. This new nature causes us to be drawn ever closer to our Lord.

5 *Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.* The great scales of heaven will bring all things into balance in the process of time. One bad deed begets an equal or greater repayment. To ridicule and chide a cripple or an orphan is to condemn the very thing that God has made. Did He not make the cripple and the orphan after His own image in the same way that He made all men in His image? Those who take pleasure in tragic events to others shall experience the same terror at their own door.

6 *Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.* Those of us who have grand children can immediately and fully understand this principle. The grandchildren are our 'glad rags' as the rural folk of Alabama say. We take inordinate pride in our grandchildren who are far brighter and more attractive than any thus far born of woman. But a son or daughter, not yet having established themselves, must rely upon the worth of their fathers for respectability. How proudly a

young child points to his father as if everyone else can clearly see his superiority as the model man.

7 Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince. First of all, we do not hear excellent words coming from the lips of a fool. If we do so hear them, we account them as foolish because of the one who uttered them. A prince should reflect the virtues of his father, the king. Are we not sons and daughters of the Almighty King? If so, are we not princes and princesses from whose lips the lie should never escape. We should quit ourselves in a manner befitting the title we own as Christians.

8 A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth There is a special value attached to a gift beyond its real value whether great or small. It has cost us nothing to acquire, and it has been given from a free and loving heart to us. I have read that the good will that influences the gift turns a mere pebble into a diamond. What about the gift of salvation? It is free to us but cost the Giver His life-blood. *Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.* (Romans 5:18) Regardless of how we view that Gift, it grows in value in our hearts.

9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends. Do you know that God seeks love from us. He loved us first, and He looks for a reciprocation of that love given. In fact, He gave His last ounce of love to us. Shall we reject the Gift? The Gift of love that God has given covers our sins just as the skin of the first innocent animal to die on earth covered the sins of Adam and Eve in the Garden eastward at Eden. The blood of Christ covers our sins and transgressions. God has promised not to remember our confessed sins any longer. But our Archenemy, the Devil, seeks to accuse us all the daylong of every jot and tittle of sin. He makes a minor indiscretion appear as a great and terrible sin through the whispers of his covalent minions.

10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool. How sadly true is this! A discrete word is all that is necessary to correct a gentleman, but a thousand reprimands fail to correct a fool. He is a fool because that is his nature, and he chooses to be a fool. He suffers throughout life for being foolish, but he blames his predicament on the shortcomings and unfair treatment of others – never himself!

11 An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him. The wicked man is a natural rebel against the moral order of the universe and its moral laws inculcated by God. He never rebels against sin, however. Because he seeks out that against which to rebel, a multitude of troubles overwhelm him. He gets what he seeks without even knowing it – Hell on earth.

12 Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly. That is going a far distance to describe the undesirability of mixing with fools. Of course, the mother bear, robbed of her young, will be a ferocious threat to physical life; but a companionship with fools may lead to loss of soul and life eternal.

13 Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house. “To render good for evil is Divine, good for good is human, evil for evil is brutish, evil for good is devilish.” - Trapp. To quote Jonathan Lawson: “The most striking illustration of this sentence, is the history of the Jewish nation. Never was such ingratitude showed to any benefactor, as they showed to the Son of God, and never was the punishment of any people so dreadful, and of so long continuance. That scattered people proclaim to

every nation under heaven how dangerous the sin of ingratitude is, especially when God our Saviour is the object of it." Jesus came bearing gifts of such divine and eternal value that no reimbursement could be made – but that is the nature of the gift. The haters and despisers of God threw the gift back in the face of the Giver and crucified Him as a reward for His kindness. My poem describes my thoughts on the matter:

Night in the Garden
By Bishop Jerry Ogles

Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons . John 18:3

*Out of the darkest Halls of Hell
Came the marchers with torches raised.
Into the Garden quiet and still
They wandered forlorn and crazed.*

*Up to the Sovereign Lord of Love
Their spears shining bright in the mist
With arrogant air and a hateful shove
They took Him who wouldn't resist.*

*Now to the head of Scribe and Priest
Was the Savior led that night,
And to Herod's Court and Pilate's Seat
Where Right gave way to the Night.*

*To the craggy heights of the Lonely Skull
They took Him and laid Him down
And into His Hands of Love they drove
Iron spikes with a terrible Sound!*

*A thorny Crown on his brow He wore
And His flesh was torn and bruised.
His Heart of Grace grew cold and sore
As the Spirit of Life was loosed.*

*The world of woe a Hope has found
In the Promise made sure by His Death
And the Saints of God with Faith abound
In the Fields that their Lord has blessed!*

14 The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with It is sure that once the leak is allowed, the flood shall follow. One word of contention provokes a response. The response provokes a more bold counter-response, and so on. Speak with calmness and wisdom, and weigh your words for effect. Reasonable persuasion is worth far more than vigorous contention.