



1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold. 2 The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all. 3 A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished. 4 By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life. 5 Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them. 6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. 7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. 8 He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail. 9 He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor. 10 Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease. 11 He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend. 12 The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor. 13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets. 14 The mouth of strange women is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein. 15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. (Proverbs 22:1-15)

The opening verse of this chapter comes as a salvo of artillery fire from an unknown position! It is all the more powerful because it is so starkly true, and so often disregarded. Our names are one of those possessions that we carry into the life beyond the veil, but only those who find their names are recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life shall retain their good names - all others are cast into outer darkness where a name is neither needed nor possessed. Shall we have the good name of a man such as Abraham, or a worthless and unenduring one such as Absalom? Would we enjoy being remembered as children of the fool? *"They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth."* (Job 30:8) *"1 A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."* As Jesus told His disciples: *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.*" (Luke 10:20) And what of that Mighty and Precious name by which we are called? *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12)

Churches, as well as men, have names which, if good, must be jealously guarded. Our own Anglican Orthodox Church was first in modern times to separate from the apostate Episcopal Church in 1963. We have foregone many opportunities to grow phenomenally in America since, if only we would compromise just a wee bit our doctrine. We have refused to do so and, thereby, have retained our name that is as good as the metal which backs it. If our names are tarnished with greed and dishonesty, we lose little by losing that name. But a good name is a constant comfort to its owner: "A

good name is better than precious ointment" (Eccl 7:1) There is, of course, one name that stands far above every other name on earth or in Heaven - the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a home that is unpretentious and common to all living - it is that "long home" to which the scribe of Ecclesiastes makes reference in Ecclesiastes 12:5 - the grave. The poor may have a less grand pine box for their remains, but the wealthy and the poor alike are subject to the worms and decay of the grave. Each return to the dust of the earth from which God made their bodies. "2 *The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.*" It is true that we all have a common Maker who will mar the clay at the last and begin a new creation.

Wisdom is a reward, and fool-heartedness a punishment in and of themselves. "3 *A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.*" God's Book of Holy Scripture is available to all, and is full of wisdom and counsel. What fool would attempt to fly an airplane without being fully aware of its operating limitations - even if he were an expert pilot? The wise will inform themselves of the perils and risk of every action while the fool disregards the warnings of God and man and rushes headlong to destroy himself. And avid smoker, or a recalcitrant alcoholic, will resist all common sense to indulge their filthy habits. I spoke with a lady once in hospital who was on oxygen for emphysema. She had to be taken off oxygen every hour at break time to be rolled outside to smoke. She told me should could not wait to get home where she could smoke whenever she wanted. Thus perish the fools.

4 *"By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honour, and life."* We are not necessarily talking of those perishable and moth-eaten riches of the gold and fashions of this world, but the true riches of the heart. It is, however, also true that the man or woman who fears God in humble faith will have even some of the world's wealth to feed their families. Churches are the same. There are two churches out of the seven of Revelations 2 & 3 in which Christ found no shortcomings. The first was Smyrna who dwelled in poverty - but Christ said that this Church was RICH. The other was the Church at Philadelphia that had little strength, but stood before the open door of Christ.

5 *"Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them."* "*Come ye out and be separate"* the Lord commands in 2 Corinthians 6:17. Bishop Dees led our church out from among the vile and foolish fifty years ago, and we remain "far from them today." Those who suggest that compromise must be made in order to 'enlarge the borders of the church' have done just that. They have enlarged the borders of the church to include every vile sin of the world, and have excluded only that which is Godly. Shame, shame! Instead of growing in stature and esteem, they have diminished in numbers and even wealth.

6 *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."* Had America not abandoned this counsel years ago, we would not have such a harvest of fools and sluggards today. God is not saying that a young boy or girl will not wander off the proper course during the challenges of growing up,; but He is saying that a child who is properly taught of God and His righteousness, though he may wander off in foolish youth, will return to the path of righteousness and not depart when grown up. It is interesting that children are referred to as arrows in a man's quiver. Please read these two verse and meditate thereon before proceeding: "*As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.*" (Psalms 127:4-5) What gems of light did the Lord whisper in

your heart regarding the meaning of these two verses? Let us examine this gem of beauty and truth in the light of wisdom:

What is the character of an arrow in the hand of a mighty man? A mighty man is strong and steady. When he places the arrow to the bowstring, he does not shake or tremble in setting the arrow. He is strong in his pull on the bow string and his hand that grasps the bow is unwavering. The arrow will not only fly STRAIGHT toward the intended target, but will have the full force of the bow, bent by the hand of the mighty man, to travel its intended distance. A child, raised by parents with strong love and unshakeable faith will travel on the trajectory the parents place it, and love will carry it the distance in that direction of life. A mighty man is so happy to have a quiver full of polished and straight arrows. So should every parent be overjoyed at the gift of children whom they can raise up in the fear and nurture of the Lord.

To whom are you servant and from whom do you borrow your counsel? 7 "*The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.*" Many Americans are in servitude to big banks and other creditors. If not banks to whom they are indentured it will likely be the Federal government. Lacking the gumption to provide for their own living, they have become totally dependent upon government handouts for their subsistence. Under such circumstances, the labor contribution to the national and general welfare is greatly reduced, and the debt of government becomes as surely an Albatross about our necks as it was about that of the Ancient Mariner (Samuel Coleridge). The resultant effect of the welfare programs begun in the last several decades, whether intentional (I feel it was so) or unintentional, has been to replace the responsibility of the church and community to care for the indigent or needy with that of a overweening and powerful welfare (or nanny) state. When men and women cease to take responsibility for their own lives and actions, the road to Hell is paved with good stolen from their fellow countrymen.

8 "*He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail.*" What do we get if we sow apple seed? Perhaps an apple tree? What do we get when we sow briars and brambles, or iniquity? A harvest of the same which lacks any fruit at all. The unrighteous (there is righteous anger) anger of the wicked will fail at last. They pursue evil for a lifetime, and are miserable to find on their deathbeds that they have profited NOTHING.

9 "*He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.*" I knew a man in Korea who worked slavishly to feed his family after WWII. He carried sticks from the mountains to sell as firewood to get money to buy rice. But even though in great want, he always saved a bit to go toward the purchase of a rice paddy. When he finally had saved enough, he proudly purchased the rice paddy and built an adobe house at the corner of his paddy. After the first harvest, though he was not yet knowledgeable of the Lord, he gave ten percent of his increase to the poor who lived in the community in abundance. Yet, he still saved and purchased more and more land until he had accrued a fortune in real estate - so much so that the US Army purchased land from him to construct an airfield. He died twenty years ago a man rich in good works, money, and the knowledge of God. He had a bountiful eye, and he did not forsake giving bread to the poor even in his last days. His eye was bountiful to fortune, but also to learning of the Lord in his mature years.

10 "*Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.*" Unfortunately, this verse is misapplied in our day to mean anyone who disagrees with the preacher even if he preaches error. The kind of scorn referred to is

not against error (for sure), but against the Word of God and His righteousness. It may be true that the scorner has come to occupy the leading role in churches in America and the proponents of Gospel truth have been cast out. If you stand on the Word of God, you are no scorner but an righteous disciple of Christ. He set the example of righteous indignation in casting out the moneychangers from the Temple of God and overturning their tables. Are you a scorner or a persevering disciple?