



22 Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate: 23 For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them. 24 Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: 25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul. 26 Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. 27 If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee? 28 Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set. 29 Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men. (Proverbs 22:22-29)

Oppression of every kind is a great sin, but especially the oppression of the poor by those whom the Lord has richly blessed with material benefits. The Lord places such an importance on the matter that He devotes a parable to the same of the "Unjust Servant". (Matthew 18:21-35) It is not only the lack of pity for the poor, but the greed of the rich that is an abomination to God. We read in James 5:4 "*Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.*" (James 5:4) "Lord of Sabaoth" means God of Battles or of Armies. Do not offend HIM! This does not merely point to robbery at gunpoint, but failure to deal justly and fairly with those whose services we enlist. An example of what I mean was related to me by a couple of young ladies of St Andrews who worked as waitresses during summer break from high school. They were quite fine young ladies and hard workers. They told me they dreaded to see church groups come to the restaurant for they brought many children that were not always well behaved and they seldom left a fair tip. I found that appalling. So, as a result of that bad news, I always leave a greater tip than might otherwise be expected since I wear the collar.

22 "*Rob not the poor, because he is poor: neither oppress the afflicted in the gate.*" I believe the All-Seeing Eye of God is particularly focused on the way in which we treat the poor and needy strangers. A person's wealth is not a good indicator of character. There truly are some wealthy people who give a great deal to help the poor. There are, as well, many more poor who give a great deal to help those around them. But history informs us that about 80% of all men considered by their contemporaries to be great, began in poverty. Out of the empty cupboard of physical and spiritual want come great accomplishment. Some of the most egregious sinners also may come to

make the most devoted Christians - John Newton , for example. What is the greatest reason that we are not to rob the poor? Ah ha! you should have read ahead..... 23 *"For the LORD will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them."* Please remember that the beggar, Lazarus, was escorted at death by the Angels of God to the bosom of Abraham. But what of the rich man who shared not the crumbs from his table with poor Lazarus? He died, was buried, and woke up nameless in Hell.

Have you ever wondered why the bust of Lincoln is engraved on the US penny? Why not a silver dollar? The Russian sculptor-emigrant, Brenner, remembered a quote of Abraham Lincoln in which he said: *"The Lord must love the common people, He has made so many of them."* So Brenner reasoned that many more common people would see the face of Lincoln on a penny than on a \$20 gold piece. Thus, he designed the penny coin to honor Lincoln's seeming disposition as a populist.

24 *"Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: 25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul."* Attitudes and emotions are highly contagious. It is for this reason that it is so easy to incite mobs to behave in ways that an individual would not likely do. Satan works best in a crowded place. We would do well to heed the counsel of an earlier Proverb: *"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men."* (Proverbs 4:14) We will do well also to heed the counsel given in the very first Psalm: *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."* (Psalms 1:1) The man or woman who is blessed will avoid relationship with those whose character is tainted with deliberate sin. If we, like Eve, arise from our place, and go to the abhorrent tree, and linger there, we shall soon be talking to the devil and doing his bidding.

26 *"Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. 27 If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?"* Make no deals with the devil or his men. It is better to donate money to a friend than to lend to him. A loan will drive many to renounce a friendship. It is better to keep a bed to sleep on, that is paid for, than to buy a camper at interest.

Modern man has been moving a lot of landmarks lately - have you noticed? The American traditions of free speech and practice of religion seem to have waned in modern times. The very clear words of the US Constitution have been turned on their head by unethical and immoral judges to mean just the opposite of what they clearly say. Amazingly, I have many Christian friends who abhor the way the literal meaning of the Constitution is being altered, yet, they see no problem at all with men tampering with the Holy Bible and its meaning. 28 *"Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set."* A landmark is a fixed reference point from which property lines are measured. If the landmark is moved, ever so slightly, the property lines of everyone will be compromised. But what of **THE ANCIENT LANDMARK?** The definite article adjective identifies this LANDMARK as one of a kind. It is the Word of God that lays out the paths and ways in which we should walk. The Holy Bible cannot be translated in terms of general meanings (dynamic equivalence) - each and every word has grave importance. To manipulate the Bible to give broad dispensation to sins of abortion, homosexuality, or to discredit the divinity of Christ (as modern versions based on inferior textual evidence certainly do) is an egregious sin. The change of one Word of Scripture is like unto changing the lay of a great Naval gun only one, tiny mil to the right or left - the artillery round will miss the target some twelve miles downrange by many yards.

If you refuse to accept the authority of Christ, simply renounce Christianity and go your merry way to Hell; but do not attempt to manipulate His Words to suit your depraved lifestyle and weaken its testimony. This Satan did in the Garden at Eden. Please read this exchange between Satan and Eve and see what the Lord reveals to your conscience: *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* (Gen 3:1-5)

If you achieved at least a 'C' in literary analysis, you will have observed the following: 1) Satan began by questioning God's Word - "*Yea, hath God said*"; 2) he promptly went on to misrepresent the Word that the Lord had spoken through 'mistranslation' - "*Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*" God said no such thing, but God said that the couple could eat of EVERY tree in the Garden except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil: "*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" (Gen 2:16-17); 3) Notice that Satan now openly REFUTES the Word of God - "*And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*" So Satan begins by questioning the Word of God as did the so-called Higher (read lower) Critics, he then misquotes God through deliberate mistranslation, and then (his last step) denies the Word of God outright.

It amazes me to learn that many red-bloodied Americans are overwrought with the change of meaning of the US Constitution but place so much trust in those who are altering the Bible for political and ideological reasons. Hear the words of the Lord: "*Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.*" (Jer 6:16) What paths are the "*old paths*?" How about using the same Bible that the Reformers used and stipulated in the Articles of Religion - "as commonly received." Have we forgotten that this means the Received Text that predates every modern Bible version? Do we not realize the veracity of this textual evidence above that of the modern text that eliminates whole verses and softens meaning in many other places. The Received Text constitutes more than 93% of all textual evidence; moreover, these manuscript evidences agree with each other in every meaningful detail; while the Westcott-Hort (NuText) are only 5% of the textual evidence and disagree in many significant places with each other. Have we gone mad to accept such a clumsy counterfeit presented in the NIV, the NASB, the ESV, the RSV, etc? Let us escape these crooked paths of man's devising and follow the old paths of the Lord. "*Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken? Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up.*" (Jer 18:14-15)

Perhaps I am simply OLD fashioned?