



17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: 18 Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him. 19 Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked; 20 For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out. 21 My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change: 22 For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both? 23 These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment. 24 He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him: 25 But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them. 26 Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer. 27 Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house. 28 Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips. 29 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work. 30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; 31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. 32 Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. 33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: 34 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man. (Proverbs 24:17-34)

We should take no pleasure in the demise of our enemy. Once he has fallen, or perished, there is no longer hope to make a friend of him. God, also, will not forgive a sinner who dies in his sins. We must care for every soul and even if opposed in battle, we must pray that God will convict and convert them. On the afternoon of the day that the English fleet sailed forth to meet the Spanish (Invincible) Armada, The Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Francis Drake, offered this prayer up to God for his men and himself. Note

the tenor and charity of it:

*"Most merciful and loving Father, we beseech thee most humbly, even with all our hearts, to pour out upon our enemies with a bountiful hand whatsoever things thou knowest may do them good; and chiefly a sound and uncorrupt mind, wherethrough they may know thee and seek thee in true charity, with their whole hearts, and love us thy children, for thy sake.+ Let not their hating of us turn to their harm, neither let us in any wise hurt them.+ Seeing that we cannot do them good for want of ability, Lord, we desire their amendment, and not their punishment. + Separate them not from us by punishing them, but join and knit them to us by thy favourable dealing with them.+ And seeing we be all ordained to be citizens of the one everlasting city, let us begin to enter in that way here already by mutual love, which may bring us right forth hither; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.'*

**17 "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: 18 Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him."** We often act out of revenge when an enemy has wronged us. There is a difference between revenge and vengeance - revenge is an act of passion while vengeance (which belongs to the Lord) is an act of justice. The Lord will repay our losses and damages in His time and in His Way. If we take revenge, the Lord is no longer inclined to enforce vengeance on the enemy, but to us.

**19 "Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked: 20 For there shall be no reward to the evil man; the candle of the wicked shall be put out."** Why do we worry so about the end times - when shall there be great persecution, when shall the horrors of Revelations be fully consummated, or when will Christ return? Do you worry about the drowning snakes while you are safe in the Ark? We look too intensely on the 'here-and-now' believing, secretly perhaps, that this is all there is. God has promised, and God will fulfill the promise, to care for us in the most pleasing way for His purposes. That is enough for us. The candle of the Lord is life. He gives life to all who are born of women. But the candle cannot burn in Hell - it is the ONLY thing that will NOT burn in Hell. When God extinguishes the candle of a dreadful sinner, it is extinguished forever. *"For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness."* (Psalms 18:28) You will note the parallels between the Proverbs of Solomon and the Psalms of his father, David.

**21 "My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change: 22 For their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the ruin of them both?"** One of the salient characteristics of God is that He is **unchanging**. The more we become like our Maker, the less vacillating we are. We sail a steady course with our compass set on the North Star. If we pay due allegiance to God and His Laws, we shall not deal with the duplicitous and unsteady characters of the world. Smooth waters do not necessarily result in the desired destination. Sailing vessels would have preferred to sail the smooth waters of the tropics than the stormy seas of the North Atlantic, but the Pilgrims would never had landed at the Rock had they done so. Those who are of an incontinent nature need to be avoided. Their behaviors cannot be depended upon. They change as easily as the wind currents. Sooner or later, they will be found on the shoals with their vessels battered and their sails in tatters.

**23 "These things also belong to the wise. It is not good to have respect of persons in judgment. 24 He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him: 25 But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them. 26 Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right**

*answer.*" Since God is no respecter of persons, neither should we be. The meaning here is that we should not judge others by the externals - poverty, wealth, beauty of appearance, etc. Judge with righteous judgment. Verse 24 is a contemporary sin of the higher officials of our present government in America. When we tell men, for example, in direct contradiction of the Word of God, that homosexual fornication is of the same distinction as God-honoring marriage, we are offending God. We are not to accept the lie of 'toleration' as righteous - we must stand up against the lies propagated by governments, religion, and society. Abortion is MURDER! Homosexuality is a filthy and abominable sin. If we ever say anything else, we, too, are liars of the most egregious form, before God. We should love to hear the answers to every problem given out of knowledge of God's Word and Wisdom. Verse 25 clearly tells us that we have a DUTY before God to rebuke the wicked - the wicked at work, the wicked at school, the wicked in government, the wicked in society - the wicked every place and at every time.

27 *"Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house."* God places a high premium on proper preparation. He is One who prepares all things prior to the event itself. His great Mind conceived all that He Created from the First Day. The decision, made in the Councils of Heaven, to prepare a Redeemer, did not happen as an afterthought; but was decided and prepared in Eternity Past before there was a Sun, or a Moon, or an Earth. Our lives, too, must be prepared for. We should not live haphazardly, but according to a plan laid out by God. Not only must we prepare to live in this temporary vessel of clay, but to live in that glorified body that we shall receive at the coming of Christ.

28 *"Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive not with thy lips. 29 Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work."* We should never allow a lie to serve an evil thought about others. It has already been said - "Vengeance is mine saith the Lord." *"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."* (Romans 12:19) God will render judgment to the wicked.

30 *"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; 31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. 32 Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. 33 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: 34 So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man."* This is as true to the spiritual, as the physical, life. Weeds grow in our garden without planting or cultivation. We must be constantly weeding the sins from our soul, and cultivating the good fruits. When we let our guard down by failing to pray, to worship, to read God's Word, then suddenly we wake up to learn that our bark has drifted far from shore and approaching the rapids. It is so much simpler to address problems as they arise rather than delaying their remedy. A young man once asked Rev Lehman Strauss how he might arrange to come to Christ at the 11th hour and enjoy more of his life before that time? Dr. Strauss told the young man the same that God has told us - *"(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"* (2 Cor 6:2) Are you gambling against time? How much time have you left?