



*1 These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out. 2 It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter. 3 The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable. 4 Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer. 5 Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness. 6 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: 7 For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldst be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen. 8 Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. 9 Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: 10 Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away. 11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. 12 As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprovener upon an obedient ear. 13 As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters. 14 Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain. 15 By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone. 16 Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it. (Prov 25:1-16)*

I am truly joyful over the manner in which God 'keeps books.' His words are specific, concise, precise, and so pregnant with meaning that all who hide them in their hearts will be filled with life overflowing. When His people sin, He does not hide the fact, but publishes it as an example to us, and to let us know that we, too, can be forgiven just as was David after committing murder and adultery. Every Word is a priceless gem. *"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them*

*from this generation for ever. The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.* (Psalms 12:6-8) It is not simply the 'general' sense of God's Word, but EVERY Word that is pure and inspired: "*Thy WORD is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.*" (Ps 119:140) "*Every WORD of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.*" (Pr 30:5) "*Thy WORD is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.*" (Ps. 119:160) Words are important for they represent, in man, thoughts of the heart; but in God's Holy Scriptures, they represent profound TRUTH!

The leading verse of this chapter of Proverbs, reminds us of the name of the Scribe God has inspired to write His Words. ***1 These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.*** God keeps His books so well that He desires that we remember from whence they come. Once more, we are reminded that these are the proverbs recorded by Solomon as God's Holy Spirit gave dictation. These proverbs were written at an earlier time and copied under the direction of King Hezekiah who sought to revive the faith of Israel. Under his great-grandson, the Books of the Law were found in the Temple and Josiah had them read to all of Israel and rejoiced in them. Hezekiah, like his great-grandson, attempted to restore all of God's Word to the people.

We may forget the importance of our words that we both think and speak. How mindlessly we say such things as "Yes, I'll pray for you" and never follow through; or "How are you?" without even wondering. The oldest known written word was the symbol '&' (ampersand) . It is used today as a conjunctive that joins ideas, places, or things together. It would be great if we used it to join God's thoughts to our own, i.e. righteousness is treasured by God **&** by ME! We should connect every virtue of God with our own values.

Even the words of men have great power, so imagine the power of a single Word of God. Observe the following examples of the power of a word:

1. A careless word may kindle strife.
- 2) A cruel word may wreck a life.
- 3) A bitter word may hate instill.
- 4) A gracious word may smooth the way.
- 5) A joyous word may light the day.
- 6) A timely word may lessen stress.
- 7) A loving word may heal and bless. (From 7700 Illustrations)

If I had to choose, I would take the last word every time. When you really consider the matter deeply, EVERY Word of God is spoken in love.

One quality that makes God's word so glorious is its mystery. ***2 "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter."*** In a sense, the nature of God is not hidden from us - it is simply that we cannot comprehend its immensity. Though vainglorious theologians do not like to admit it, there are features of God's Word that we can never understand in this life. No man knows the Bible so well that he cannot learn a new truth with every reading of it. King Josiah was a righteous king. In ordering the remodeling of the Temple, the priests discovered the lost Books of the Bible. King Josiah was shocked that Israel had drifted so far from the terms of the Law. He ordered the Books read to all the people. This king took great honor in finding out God's Word and making it known to his subjects. What if America had such a ruler today? "Machinery enclosed in compartments goes round and accomplishes its

work as well as if it were all exposed to view. At one extremity the raw material goes in, and at another the manufactured article comes out. This is all that the visitor sees. For once, and to instruct a stranger, the master may take the covering off, and lay bare the intricate accumulation of cylinders and wheels; but soon he shuts the door again. Thus has the Author of salvation in the case of some opened up in the processes of His providence, which are usually conducted in secret. (W. Arnot, .D.D.) "3 The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable."

4 "Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer. 5 Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness." Once again, the Psalm quoted applies: "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Seven seems to be the number of perfection in light (the rainbow), in music (the seven-scale notes), and in creation itself (seven days). The Refiner sits beside the fire and melts the silver. The dross comes to the top. He skims the dross away and heats the silver again, and removes the dross seven times. At last, The Refiner (God) is able to see His own image clearly reflected in the purified silver (His sanctified Elect). Now the silver is marketable. A righteous king will never command an immoral law. His law will be righteous and his judgment sure. Such a king will remove the dross from the good silver making his a pure nation.

"6 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: 7 For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen." Why do men and women insist on the favored place of authority in the church. They would sooner split a church over the color of the drapes, or the texture of the carpet, than over serious doctrinal issues. Do not seek the place of honor. Be faithful, dependable, and humble. The ruler will recognize such qualities as not threatening his rule and will reward you with greater honor and authority.

Wise words on our dealings with others: 8 "Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbour hath put thee to shame. 9 Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another: 10 Lest he that heareth it put thee to shame, and thine infamy turn not away." God gives us the two sides of the coin in dealing with others - the WORST Way and the BEST way. The WRONG way is to go into an argument with your neighbor before you are fully informed of the facts, or had time to consider the matter. (I call this the 'redneck' approach). Do not broadcast your differences to others until you have made a settlement. Jesus best describes the approach: "**Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.**" (Matt 18:15-17) The BEST approach is to settle, face-to-face, with your neighbor. We settle no differences by tale-bearing.

One grand adjective I have failed to use above in describing God's Word is that it is BEAUTIFUL. When we adorn our vocabulary with grace, the words will be beautiful and attractive to the listener. Such is this verse of Proverbs: "11 A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." How powerful in beauty is this description. In the ancient East (and even in our own day) the orange fruit is often described as "Apples of Gold." The fruit of the orange emerges from a beautiful white blossom much

like a pitcher of silver. A "word fitly spoken" has many applications. 1) it is a word that has meaning and purpose; 2) it is spoken at the moment most conducive for effect; 3) it is spoken in beauty and grace which gives it appeal. The Word of God represents a King and Kingdom above every earthly throne. Its words of description should be beautiful, true, and timely. Spoken from the lips of one who loves the Word, it will acquire a beauty beyond the casual conversation of daily life. This adds to the preacher's credibility. If the salesman knows and loves his product, he will be an earnest and effective salesman of it.

Suddenly, the mysteries of God become a floodgate of beauty: "12 As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reproof upon an obedient ear." An ornament of fine gold draws immediate attention to itself. So do words of reproof, tastily and lovingly delivered to a receptive ear, take on great credibility. The beautiful fountain continues: "13 As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters." The long, hot middle eastern summer is over, the wheat is harvested from the fields, and now comes the cold, refreshing snows of early winter. The true and reliable messenger of the king (or of God) delights his Master in loyal and dutiful service. The soul of God is not so refreshed by those POSING as modern day ministers but who truly are fountains of foul and odorous waters.

"14 Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain." Do you wonder if perhaps some of our modern, fancy-pants preachers may be meant here; or the charismatic, over-endowed practitioners of the spirit who boast of babbling tongues and knee jerk worship? They are so wholly gifted by **SOME** spirit on Sundays, and by the devil's pride the remaining days of the week! They have no anchor for docking, or compass for navigation: "*These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.*" (Jude 1:12-13)

Even though some of Solomon's proverbs may hurt as thorns, they are spoken out of love for our improvement. "15 By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone." A prince does not act on a whim, and neither does God. The prince will hear out the petitioner, confirm, and take action. So does God, in our prayerful petitions, wait until we have emptied our heart out to Him.

Gibbon, in the '*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*', says that the Roman state turned to debauchery, gluttony, and immoral sins such as homosexuality which led to their fall. They had such insatiable appetites as to eat far more than convenient. In fact, so much that they would force themselves to vomit so that they could eat even more! Watch out, America! 16 "Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it." Christianity is pictured to the world by its adversaries as a religion that suppresses joy and happiness. But this is actually the opposite of what true Christianity means. It gives water in the desert where no water is. It gives bread in the Wilderness where beforetime there was none. It gives the joyful wine of the spirit to the soul that seems un-possessed of any reason for joy. Certainly, God wants us to eat the happy and sweet honey of His Word, but do you know that you can even do THAT to excess? The man or woman who boasts of reading God's Word straight through often chokes on it at Leviticus. God desires that we study His Word wisely and temperately. If we simply read to boast of our reading, all meaning is lost. Often, when we study intensely the Word of God, do we not often have to pause to

digest its meaning and beauty? Oh, yes, and there is nothing happy of 'gay' about the homosexual lifestyle. It leads to depression and early death (life expectancy of a practicing homosexual is 44 years - wonder why?)