



17 He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth. 18 He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool. 19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. 20 The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth. 21 The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom. 22 The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. 23 It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom. 24 The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted. 25 As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation. 26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him. 27 The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. 28 The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. 29 The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. 30 The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth. 31 The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out. 32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness. (Prov 10:17-32)

The self-opinionated fool is incorrigible in his ignorance. His pride, based on only ignorance and a foolish and unmerited regard for his own lack of understand, blocks any process of enlightenment from entering his tiny brain. This is very relevant to the man who cannot hear God speak for the treasured regard for his own free will. He cannot accept the will of God as superior to his own foolish desires. If a man or woman will listen to instruction of Wisdom, Holy Scripture, and the Holy Spirit, he or she will be attuned to that eternity made available only through the Author of Life. He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.

No ruse of the tongue will go unexposed and unpunished at God's own time. So any who slanders another or who conceals hatred by a hypocritical pretense of friendship will bear a heavy retribution in the day when all secrets are revealed before the throne of God. Oftentimes, the just punishment occurs in this lifetime as well as in the Judgment. He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool. In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. Those loose lips are very apt to speak from an empty heart that is fraught with sin. It is always more wise to hear the full matter rather than eagerly speaking out in ignorance. "The wise old owl sat high in the Oak. The more he saw, the less he spoke. The less he spoke, the more he heard. Why aren't we all like that old bird?" (Mr. B. L.

Hale, my beloved high school French teacher who never suffered a loss of words). All that you say will be held against you in a Court of Judgment! The slanderer is a fool as well as a sinner because he has no limits in victimizing everyone with whom he has odds. Soon, no man will go near him.

The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth. Why is this so? In the early days of the last century, the US Dollar carried this inscription: "Redeemable in real money (silver) at the nearest Federal Reserve Bank." A one dollar paper note could be exchanged for the face value's worth of silver. The US dollar, in those days, was as good as its word, but what of today. Does its value not float and decline in value according to the number of such notes printed by the Feds without an ounce of silver to back it? My father used to tell me that he would much prefer the handshake of an honest gentleman to the iron-clad contract of a thief. Whatever an honest man tells you is just as good as the silver on deposit in his heart. But the wicked speak from hearts devoid of any precious metal to back it up. Those hearts are filled with dross and filth.

The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom. We see righteousness and wickedness, wisdom and foolishness, compared in the same sense of oneness. Righteousness or wickedness are not an act, but a disposition in manner and habit. An able man of righteousness does not feel the need to boast of his resources. He is most often far less rhetorical than his opposite - the fool. Fools boast of their prowess in battle, of their false wealth and means, and a hundred other deceptions; but when the time comes for payday, they come empty-handed to the table and, usually, quite hungry. It is the fool that fails to save for the future, fails to learn wisdom so that his words will have meaning, and fails to labor so that he is independent in his living that is always seeking his welfare from those righteous people who have saved, labored, and learned to live by God's order.

The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it. There are certainly hardships that befall us all, however, the Lord will bless the righteous and will ease the burden that he bears and not add sorrow to sorrow. Laziness is a form of wickedness. The lazy man will confront the same hardships as the wise man; however, he is unable to overcome them since his hedonistic lifestyle has left many additional stones of sorrow that are uncovered by a single hardship. The wicked has paved his road with thin plaster whose facade is supported by sharp stones and thorns. The storms of life wash away the plaster and the stony way is left to him.

It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom. Every year, there is a humorous letter that is published entitled, The Darwin Report. It list the most foolish and insane acts for the past year of the 'self-evolved' (my term) man; incidents such as: "Is this gun loaded? Let me press it against my ear, pull the trigger, and find out." You get the message. The more insane the act, the greater pride taken in doing it by the fools of the world. To a man of understanding, the chamber of the gun might be checked to see if it is loaded; or he may fire the gun into the empty space beyond. To the fool, the empty space is between his ears.

The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of the righteous shall be granted. There is a completely opposite reward that comes to the wicked as compared to the righteous. The wicked is full of a dormant fear that arises constantly as a result of the prospect of his being found out. But the desires of the righteous, being in perfect congruity with the Will of God, is granted him. Personally, I prefer the desires of the

righteous to the fears of the wicked to be my reward.

As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation. The tornadic whirlwind dissolves into thin air and leaves no trace of itself; however, in its wake, like the wicked, it leaves only death and ruin. The opposing illustration of the righteous is an everlasting foundation of faith and hope. The righteous are like the tree planted by the rivers of water - it shall not be moved. This truth is expressed in the words of a negro spiritual:

Jesus is my Savior, I shall not be moved;  
In His love and favor, I shall not be moved,  
Just like a tree that's planted by the waters,  
Lord, I shall not be moved.

In my Christ abiding, I shall not be moved;  
In His love I'm hiding, I shall not be moved,  
Just like a tree that's planted by the waters,  
Lord, I shall not be moved.

If I trust Him ever, I shall not be moved;  
He will fail me never, I shall not be moved,  
Just like a tree that's planted by the waters,  
Lord, I shall not be moved.

On His word I'm feeding, I shall not be moved;  
He's the One that's leading, I shall not be moved,  
Just like a tree that's planted by the waters,  
Lord, I shall not be moved.

Chorus  
I shall not be, I shall not be moved;  
I shall not be, I shall not be moved;  
Just like a tree that's planted by the waters,  
Lord, I shall not be moved.

As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him. Just as vinegar draws up the lips and smoke the eyes, so are the grimaces and frowns of any who depend upon the sluggard to fulfill their hopes. The sluggard simply wastes away the resources that are offered him for his labor. The sluggard is like unto a snail that neither labors nor enriches the garden. In the light of day, they slink under stones and moss. In the hours of darkness, they emerge to devour the product and labors of honest men; but when the sunrise approaches, they again head for their dark shelters. There are two things that the snail cannot abide - salt and light. Both will melt the snail. Salt (righteous living) and Light (the Word of God) will stop the snail in its literal, gossamer tracks. As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. (Psalms 58:8)

The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. You will recall that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom. Once begun, the knowledge and wisdom builds as line upon line and precept upon precept. It adds years and joy to a natural span of life, but it also adds an eternity to our mortal years when the shadows of life lengthen. The wicked, on the other hand, lack

wisdom and knowledge. Their sins actually lead them to a shortened lifespan and an eternal death. The homosexual lobby fails to mention that the average life-expectancy of a practicing homosexual is only 43 years. Wonder why?

The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. Make no mistake - the wicked know the reward that awaits them in fear and trembling. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. (Heb 10:26-27) The expectation of the righteous is not only a contemplated gladness, but a real and present gladness as well.

The way of the LORD is strength to the upright: but destruction shall be to the workers of iniquity. "Stand tall, soldier!" was an often repeated command from the military drill sergeant to the trainee. You are a soldier and drooping posture is beneath your dignity. So to the righteous! There is an uprightness of walk which compels obedience to God, but which can also be a testimony of righteousness to the observers. Men, unlike animals of lower form, walk upright and straightforward. The more we become the character of an animal, the less upright and straightforward we become. Since all that the wicked have ever contributed has been destruction and ruin, this ruin will be their investment and reward in eternity.

The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth. God is immovable. The righteous, having God as their Ark and Shelter, shall also be immovable. The righteous have their heritage in the Lord both on earth and in Heaven. They will hold their places even when, and if, Hell freezes over. But the wicked have no heritage either on earth or in Heaven. Sorry, Reuben, but that leaves only one resort - Hell. They have no names because the only names that matter are recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out. It would seem to me from this last verse that the slanderous language will have no organ from which to sputter lies. There is no greater treasure than to have a friend who will speak to you words of wisdom and not flattery.

The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness. How do the righteous know what is acceptable? It is because their hearts and minds are guided by the Word of God and confirmed to their souls by the Holy Spirit of God. The wicked have no such reserve of treasure in their hearts. In fact, their hearts are filled with hate and violence. There is no place found for virtue in the heart of the wicked. Having chosen to follow their own waning stars, the wicked are left without a chart or compass upon which to rely. There is neither a governor for their mouths or for their actions. The virtue of the righteous lift them to the highest heavens, but the weight and burden of abject sin draws the wicked downward to the pits of Hell itself. Which nature, friend, do you prefer?