

PROVERBS 13 THE PRESERVER OF LIBERTY AND FREEDOM

Becoming rich by poverty (verse 7)

“There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.”

Have you ever observed the striking difference between those who are here spoken of as making themselves rich, while really being poor; and those who have real riches, although they have made themselves poor, as far as worldly possessions go? But passing over the consideration of such characters for a moment, surely we need no help to enable us to discover One Who truly made Himself poor, while possessing great riches! Let us direct our eye to the contemplation of our precious Savior; for no one else has ever humbled Himself to such a degree, or manifested such a lowliness of soul like Him. Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers, “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). We must not pass over this verse, until we have questioned our own hearts as to whether the conscious sense of Jesus’ unequalled humbleness, and of His immense treasure, has brought our souls into love with Him.

God’s Word – the Preserver of liberty and freedom (verse 13)

“Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.”

This verse has a private and personal application, as well as a public one; but it is in the Lord’s Providential government of the nations, that its truth has been most conspicuously displayed. The kingdoms of the world – even in these days – prosper or suffer in proportion as they honor or despise God’s Word. Show me a land where the Bible is degraded and forbidden, and I will show you a land whose history is written in blood and tears. But show me a land where the Bible is valued and promulgated, and I will show you a country that is prosperous and free. Travel to all the nations of the world, one by one. See where personal property is valued, and where human life is protected. Mark the places where you would like to invest your means and raise your family. And you will shun some of the sunniest places on earth – as if they lay under a polar night – because the light of Biblical truth does not shine in their sky! Even if you traverse the globe in search of only a comfortable earthly home, your tent – like Abraham’s – will certainly be set up in the place where the Lord is honored and obeyed. Some governments repudiate the Bible as an unintelligible or dangerous Book, and they implicitly submit themselves and their subjects to the spiritual guidance of men. But in other lands, God’s grace has caused the leaders to hold His Word in their hands as both the standard of their teachers’ doctrines, and also as the rule of their own personal lives. And therein lies the chief difference between the morals and prosperity of various nations. Those which despise the



Scriptures are very often miserable places to live. The map of the world is sufficient evidence that God has revealed – and is still revealing – His will to mankind! The Lord has graced our land with many privileges, and He has caused it to grow great, while many others have been wasted. He has blessed us with many freedoms, while other people are robbed

of their liberty, or retain it at the price of their own blood! We ought to understand Who makes us different. The Lord's Word, in His Bible, has made us what we are; and it is dark ingratitude to despise or neglect it. It is often observed that when a person rises from obscurity to a high position in the world, he no longer remembers the people who helped him rise. This is a mark of an unthankful, ungenerous mind; and more than a few symptoms of this vulgar vice may be seen in our own country, both in high offices and in the common citizen. Those who are mercifully preserved and exalted to a place of blessedness do not care to know their Preserver. Perhaps if our politicians and their people were made to spend a year of subjection to Chinese communists, or to the persecution of a North Korean tyrant – maybe that experience would teach them a truth which they are sadly too slow to learn. Perhaps then they might discover the true worth of the Bible as the Preserver of their liberties and freedoms, if they lived under the absence of those liberties and freedoms for a short time.

Choose your friends carefully! (verse 20)

“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”

The desire for friendship is coveted by almost everyone, but it is an especially powerful instinct of the young. Like many other forces, it can be a mighty force for either good or evil, according to the direction in which it is turned. It is especially at a young age, therefore, when there is room and need for much prayer, watchfulness, and effort – both *by* and *for* the rising generation. By the warnings of God's Word, and by the lessons of our own experience, we know what the end of certain friendships will be, even before they begin. It may be painful to your desires to part ways with a certain friend whose company you enjoy, but who is doing damage to your soul; but eternal life depends upon that painful act. Young men and women! The Lord is watching to see whether or not you will throw off the chain of charming companions who will lead you astray; and whether or not you will cling to the meek and lowly One, and follow the Lamb wherever He goes! And to those who ask Him for wisdom in this matter, He will certainly bless them with the friendship of fellow-travelers toward Zion.

Lord, help our nation to realize that the Bible is the true Magna Charta, which secures to us all the freedoms – both temporal and spiritual – that we enjoy! Amen.