

CHAPTER 22

PROVERBS 22:1

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here are two things which are more valuable and which we should covet more than great riches: —

1. To be well spoken of: *A name* (that is, *a good name*, a name for good things with God and good people) *is rather to be chosen than great riches*; that is, we should be more careful to do that by which we may get and keep a good name than that by which we may raise and increase a great estate. Great riches bring great cares with them, expose men to danger, and add no real value to a man. A fool and a knave may have *great riches*, but *a good name* makes a man easy and safe, supposes a man wise and honest, redounds to the glory of God, and gives a man a greater opportunity of doing good. By great riches we may relieve the bodily wants of others, but by a good name we may recommend religion to them.

2. To be well beloved, to have an interest in the esteem and affections of all about us; this is better *than silver and gold*. Christ has neither silver nor gold, but he *grew in favour with God and man*, ^{<105>}Luke 2:52. This should teach us to look with a holy contempt upon the wealth of this world, not to set our hearts upon that, but with all possible care to *think of those things that are lovely and of good report*, ^{<106>}Philippians 4:8.

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MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. Among the children of men divine Providence has so ordered it that some are *rich* and others *poor*, and these are intermixed in societies: *The Lord is the Maker of both*, both the author of their being and the disposer

of their lot. The greatest man in the world must acknowledge God to be his Maker, and is under the same obligations to be subject to him that the meanest is; and the poorest has the honour to be the work of God's hands as much as the greatest. *Have they not all one Father?* ^{<312>}Malachi 2:10; ^{<3315>}Job 31:15. God makes some rich, that they may be charitable to the poor, and others poor, that they may be serviceable to the rich; and they have need of one another, ^{<412>}1 Corinthians 12:21. He make some poor, to exercise their patience, and contentment, and dependence upon God, and others rich, to exercise their thankfulness and beneficence. *Even the poor we have always with us; they shall never cease out of the land, nor the rich neither.*

2. Notwithstanding the distance that is in many respects between *rich and poor*, yet in most things they *meet together*, especially before *the Lord*, who *is the Maker of them all*, and *regards not the rich more than the poor*, ^{<3349>}Job 34:19. *Rich and poor meet together* at the bar of God's justice, all guilty before God, concluded under sin, and shapen in iniquity, the rich as much as the poor; and they meet at the throne of God's grace; the poor are as welcome there as the rich. There is the same Christ, the same scripture, the same Spirit, the same covenant of promises, for them both. There is the same heaven for poor saints that there is for rich: Lazarus is in the bosom of Abraham. And there is the same hell for rich sinners that there is for poor. All stand upon the same level before God, as they do also in the grave. *The small and great are there.*

^{<112>}PROVERBS 22:3

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

See here,

1. The benefit of wisdom and consideration: *A prudent man*, by the help of his prudence, will *foresee an evil*, before it comes, and *hide himself*; he will be aware when he is entering into a temptation and will put on his armour and stand on his guard. When the clouds are gathering for a storm he takes the warning, and flies to the name of the Lord as his strong tower. Noah foresaw the deluge, Joseph the years of famine, and provided accordingly.

2. The mischief of rashness and inconsideration. *The simple*, who believe every word that flatters them, will believe none that warns them, and so they *pass on and are punished*. They venture upon sin, though they are told what will be in the end thereof; they throw themselves into trouble, notwithstanding the fair warning given them, and they repent their presumption when it is too late. See an instance of both these, ~~(100)~~ Exodus 9:20, 21. Nothing is so fatal to precious souls as this, they will not take warning.

~~(101)~~ PROVERBS 22:4

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

See here,

1. Wherein religion does very much consist — in *humility and the fear of the Lord*; that is, walking humbly with God. We must so reverence God's majesty and authority as to submit with all humility to the commands of his word and the disposals of his providence. We must have such low thoughts of ourselves as to behave humbly towards God and man. Where the fear of God is there will be humility.

2. What is to be gotten by it — *riches, and honour*, and comfort, *and* long life, in this world, as far as God sees good, at least spiritual *riches and honour* in the favour of God, and the promises and privileges of the covenant of grace, *and* eternal *life* at last.

~~(102)~~ PROVERBS 22:5

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note

1. The way of sin is vexatious and dangerous: *In the way of the froward*, that crooked way, which is contrary to the will and word of God, *thorns and snares* are found, thorns of grief for past sins and snares entangling them in further sin. He that makes no conscience of what he says and does will find himself hampered by that imaginary liberty, and tormented by his

pleasures. Froward people, who are soon angry, expose themselves to trouble at every step. Every thing will fret and vex him that will fret and vex at every thing.

2. The way of duty is safe and easy: *He that keeps his soul*, that watches carefully over his own heart and ways, is *far from those thorns and snares*, for his way is both plain and pleasant.

PROVERBS 22:6

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here is,

1. A great duty enjoined, particularly to those that are the parents and instructors of children, in order to the propagating of wisdom, that it may not die with them: *Train up children* in that age of vanity, to keep them from the sins and snares of it, in that learning age, to prepare them for what they are designed for. *Catechise* them; initiate them; keep them under discipline. *Train* them as soldiers, who are taught to handle their arms, keep rank, and observe the word of command. *Train* them up, not in the way they would go (the bias of their corrupt hearts would draw them aside), but *in the way they should go*, the way in which, if you love them, you would have them go. *Train up a child according as he is capable* (as some take it), with a gentle hand, as nurses feed children, little and often, ~~Deuteronomy~~ Deuteronomy 6:7.

2. A good reason for it, taken from the great advantage of this care and pains with children: When they *grow up*, when they *grow old*, it is to be hoped, they *will not depart from it*. Good impressions made upon them then will abide upon them all their days. Ordinarily the vessel retains the savour with which it was first seasoned. Many indeed have departed from the good way in which they were trained up; Solomon himself did so. But early training may be a means of their recovering themselves, as it is supposed Solomon did. At least the parents will have the comfort of having done their duty and used the means.

PROVERBS 22:7

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

He had said (v. 2.), *Rich and poor meet together*; but here he finds, here he shows, that, as to the things of this life, there is a great difference; for,

1. Those that have little will be in subjection to those that have much, because they have dependence upon them, they have received, and expect to receive, support from them: *The rich rule over the poor*, and too often more than becomes them, with pride and rigour, unlike to God, who, though he be great, yet despises not any. It is part of the affliction of the poor that they must expect to be trampled upon, and part of their duty to be serviceable, as far as they can, to those that are kind to them, and study to be grateful.

2. Those that are but going behindhand find themselves to lie much at the mercy of those that are before hand: *The borrower is servant to the lender*, is obliged to him, and must sometimes beg, *Have patience with me*. Therefore it is part of Israel's promised happiness that they should lend and borrow, ⁽⁵¹²⁾Deuteronomy 28:12. And it should be our endeavour to keep as much as may be out of debt. Some sell their liberty to gratify their luxury.

PROVERBS 22:8

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note

1. Ill-gotten gains will not prosper: *He that sows iniquity*, that does an unjust thing in hopes to get by it, *shall reap vanity*; what he gets will never do him any good nor give him any satisfaction. He will meet nothing but disappointment. Those that create trouble to others do but prepare trouble for themselves. Men shall reap as they sow.

2. Abused power will not last. If the rod of authority turn into a *rod of anger*, if men rule by passion instead of prudence, and, instead of the public welfare, aim at nothing so much as the gratifying of their own

resentments, it *shall fail* and be broken, and their power shall not bear them out in their exorbitances, ^{<210>}Isaiah 10:24, 25.

^{<210>}PROVERBS 22:9

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here is,

1. The description of a charitable man; he has a *bountiful eye*, opposed to the evil eye (^{<210>}Proverbs 23:6) and the same with the *single eye* (^{<402>}Matthew 6:22), — an eye that seeks out objects of charity, besides those that offer themselves, — an eye that, upon the sight of one in want and misery, affects the heart with compassion, — an eye that with the alms gives a pleasant look, which makes the alms doubly acceptable. He has also a liberal hand: *He gives of his bread* to those that need — *his bread*, the bread appointed for his own eating. He will rather abridge himself than see the poor perish for want; yet he does not give all *his bread*, but *of his bread*; the poor shall have their share with his own family.
2. The blessedness of such a man. The loins of the poor will bless them, all about him will speak well of him, and God himself will bless him, in answer to many a good prayer put up for him, and he *shall be blessed*.

^{<210>}PROVERBS 22:10

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

See here,

1. What *the scorner* does. It is implied that he sows discord and makes mischief wherever he comes. Much of the *strife and contention* which disturb the peace of all societies is owing to *the evil interpreter* (as some read it), that construes every thing into the worst, to those that despise and deride every one that comes in their way and take a pride in bantering and abusing all mankind.
2. What is to be done with the scorner that will not be reclaimed: *Cast him out* of your society, as Ishmael, when he mocked Isaac, was thrust out of

Abraham's family. Those that would secure the peace must exclude the scorners.

~~321~~ PROVERBS 22:11

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here is,

- 1.** The qualification of an accomplished, a complete gentleman, that is fit to be employed in public business. He must be an honest man, a man *that loves pureness of heart* and hates all impurity, not only pure from all fleshly lusts, but from all deceit and dissimulation, from all selfishness and sinister designs, that takes care to approve himself a man of sincerity, is just and fair from principle, and delights in nothing more than in keeping his own conscience clean and void of offence. He must also be able to speak with a good grace, not to daub and flatter, but to deliver his sentiments decently and ingeniously, in language clean and smooth as his spirit.
- 2.** The preferment such a man stands fair for: *The king*, if he be wise and good, and understand his own and his people's interest, *will be his friend*, will make him of his cabinet-council, as there was one in David's court, and another in Solomon's, that was called the *king's friend*; or, in any business that he has, the king will befriend him. Some understand it of the King of kings. A man *in whose spirit there is no guile*, and whose speech is always with grace, God will be his friend, Messiah, the Prince, will be his friend. *This honour have all the saints.*

~~322~~ PROVERBS 22:12

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here is,

- 1.** The special care God takes to *preserve knowledge*, that is, to keep up religion in the world by keeping up among men the knowledge of himself and of good and evil, notwithstanding the corruption of mankind, and the

artifices of Satan to blind men's minds and keep them in ignorance. It is a wonderful instance of the power and goodness of *the eyes of the Lord*, that is, his watchful providence. He preserves *men of knowledge*, wise and good men (~~409~~2 Chronicles 16:9), particularly faithful witnesses, who speak what they know; God protects such, and prospers their counsels. He does by his grace *preserve knowledge* in such, secures his own work and interest in them. See ~~311E~~Proverbs 2:7, 8.

2. The just vengeance God takes on those that speak and act against knowledge and against the interests of knowledge and religion in the world: *He overthrows the words of the transgressor*, and *preserves knowledge* in spite of him. He defeats all the counsels and designs of false and treacherous men, and turns them to their own confusion.

~~312B~~PROVERBS 22:13

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. Those that have no love for their business will never want excuses to shake it off. Multitudes are ruined, both for soul and body, by their slothfulness, and yet still they have something or other to say for themselves, so ingenious are men in putting a cheat upon their own souls. And who, I pray, will be the gainer at last, when the pretences will be all rejected as vain and frivolous?

2. Many frighten themselves from real duties by imaginary difficulties: *The slothful man* has work to do *without* in the fields, but he fancies *there is a lion* there; nay, he pretends he dares not go along the streets for fear somebody or other should meet him and kill him. He does not himself think so; he only says so to those that call him up. He talks of *a lion without*, but considers not his real danger from the devil, that *roaring lion*, which is in bed with him, and from his own slothfulness, which kills him.

~~3124~~ PROVERBS 22:14

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

This is designed to warn all young men against the lusts of uncleanness. As they regard the welfare of their souls, let them take heed of *strange women*, lewd women, whom they ought to be strange to, of *the mouth of strange women*, of the kisses of their lips (~~3173~~ Proverbs 7:13), of the words of their lips, their charms and enticements. Dread them; have nothing to do with them; for,

1. Those who abandon themselves to that sin give proof that they are abandoned of God: it *is a deep pit*, which those *fall* into that are *abhorred of the Lord*, who leaves them to themselves to enter into that temptation, and takes off the bridle of his restraining grace, to punish them for other sins. Value not thyself upon thy being in favour with such women, when it proclaims thee under the wrath of God.

2. It is seldom that they recover themselves, for it *is a deep pit*; it will be hard getting out of it, it so besots the mind and debauches the conscience, by pleasing the flesh.

~~3125~~ PROVERBS 22:15

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

We have here two very sad considerations: —

1. That corruption is woven into our nature. Sin is *foolishness*; it is contrary both to our right reason and to our true interest. It *is in the heart*; there is an inward inclination to sin, to speak and act foolishly. It *is in the heart of children*; they bring it into the world with them; it is what they were shapen and conceived in. It is not only *found* there, but it is *bound* there; it is annexed to the heart (so some); vicious dispositions cleave closely to the soul, are bound to it as the cion to the stock into which it is grafted, which quite alters the property. There is a knot tied between the soul and sin, a true lover's knot; they two became one flesh. It is true of ourselves, it is true of our children, whom we have begotten in our own likeness. *O God! thou knowest this foolishness.*

2. That correction is necessary to the cure of it. It will not be got out by fair means and gentle methods; there must be strictness and severity, and that which will cause grief. Children need to be corrected, and kept under discipline, by their parents; and we all need to be corrected by our heavenly Father (³⁸¹⁶Hebrews 12:6, 7), and under the correction we must stroke down folly and kiss the rod.

³¹²⁶PROVERBS 22:16

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

This shows what evil courses rich men sometimes take, by which, in the end, they will impoverish themselves and provoke God, notwithstanding their abundance, to bring them to want; they *oppress the poor and give to the rich*.

1. They will not in charity relieve the poor, but withhold from them, that by saving that which is really the best, but which they think the most needless part of their expenses, they may *increase their riches*; but they will make presents *to the rich*, and give them great entertainments, either in pride and vain-glory, that they may look great, or in policy, that they may receive it again with advantage. Such *shall surely come to want*. Many have been beggared by a foolish generosity, but never any by a prudent charity. Christ bids us to invite the poor, ²¹⁴²Luke 14:12, 13.

2. They not only will not relieve *the poor*, but they *oppress* them, rob the spital, extort from their poor tenants and neighbours, invade the rights of those who have not wherewithal to defend themselves, and then *give bribes to the rich*, to protect and countenance them in it. But it is all in vain; they *shall come to want*. Those that rob God, and so make him the enemy, cannot secure themselves by *giving to the rich*, to make them their friends.

SERIOUS ATTENTION INCULCATED

Solomon here changes his style and manner of speaking. Hitherto, for the most part, since the beginning of Proverbs 10, he had laid down doctrinal truths, and but now and then dropped a word of exhortation, leaving us to make the application as we went along; but here, to the end of Proverbs 24, he directs his speech to his son, his pupil, his reader, his hearer, speaking as to a particular person. Hitherto, for the most part, his sense was comprised in one verse, but here usually it is drawn out further. See how Wisdom tries variety of methods with us, lest we should be cloyed with any one. To awaken attention and to assist our application the method of direct address is here adopted. Ministers must not think it enough to preach before their hearers, but must preach to them, nor enough to preach to them all in general, but should address themselves to particular persons, as here: Do *thou* do so and so. Here is,

I. An earnest exhortation to get wisdom and grace, by attending to *the words of the wise men*, both written and preached, the words of the prophets and priests, and particularly to that *knowledge* which Solomon in this book gives men of good and evil, sin and duty, rewards and punishments. To these *words*, to this *knowledge*, the ear must be *bowed down* in humility and serious attention and the heart *applied* by faith, and love, and close consideration. The ear will not serve without the heart.

II. Arguments to enforce this exhortation. Consider,

1. The worth and weight of the things themselves which Solomon in this book gives us the *knowledge* of. They are not trivial things, for amusements and diversion, not jocular proverbs, to be repeated in sport and in order to pass away time. No; they are *excellent things*, which concern the glory of God, the holiness and happiness of our souls, the welfare of mankind and all communities; they are *princely things* (so the word is), fit for kings to speak and senates to hear; they are things that concern *counsels and knowledge*, that is, wise counsels, relating to the most important concerns; things which will not only make us knowing ourselves, but enable us to advise others.

2. The clearness of the discovery of these things and the directing of them to us in particular. “They are *made known*, publicly known, that all may read, — plainly known, that he that runs may read, — *made known this day* more fully than ever before, in this day of light and knowledge, — *made known in this thy day*. But it is only a little while that this light is with thee; perhaps the things that are *this day made known to thee*, if thou improve not the day of thy visitation, may, before to-morrow, be *hidden from thy eyes*. They are *written*, for the greater certainty, and that they may be received and the more safely transmitted pure and entire to posterity. But that which the emphasis is here most laid upon is that they are *made known to thee, even to thee*, and *written to thee*, as if it were a letter directed to thee by name. It is suited to thee and to thy case; thou mayest in this glass see thy own face; it is intended for thee, to be a rule to thee, and by it thou must be judged.” We cannot say of these things, “They are good things, but they are nothing to us;” no, they are of the greatest concern imaginable to us.

3. The agreeableness of these things to us, in respect both of comfort and credit.

(1.) If we hide them in our hearts, they will be very pleasing and yield us an abundant satisfaction (v. 18): “*It is a pleasant thing*, and will be thy constant entertainment, *if thou keep them within thee*; if thou digest them, and be actuated and governed by them, and delivered into them as into a mould.” The form of godliness, when that is rested in, is but a force put upon a man, and he does but do penance in that white clothing; those only that submit to the power of godliness, and make heart-work of it, find the pleasure of it, ^{<3020>}Proverbs 2:10.

(2.) If we make use of them in our discourse, they will be very becoming, and gain us a good reputation. *They shall be fitted in thy lips*. “Speak of these things, and thou speakest like thyself, and as is fit for thee to speak considering thy character; thou wilt also have pleasure in speaking of these things as well as in thinking of them.”

4. The advantage designed us by them. The *excellent things* which God has *written to us* are not like the commands which the master gives his servant, which are all intended for the benefit of the master, but like those which the master gives his scholar, which are all intended for the benefit of the scholar. These things must be kept by us, for they are written to us,

(1.) That we may have a confidence in him and communion with him. *That thy trust may be in the Lord*, v. 19. We cannot trust in God except in the way of duty; we are *therefore* taught our duty, that we may have reason to trust in God. Nay, this is itself one great duty we are to learn, and a duty that is the foundation of all practical religion, to live a life of delight in God and dependence on him.

(2.) That we may have a satisfaction in our own judgment: “*That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth*; that thou mayest know what is truth, mayest plainly distinguish between it and falsehood, and mayest know upon what grounds thou receivest and believest the truths of God.” Note,

[1.] It is a desirable thing to know, not only *the words of truth*, but *the certainty* of them, that our faith may be intelligent and rational, and may grow up to a full assurance.

[2.] The way to *know the certainty of the words of truth* is to make conscience of our duty; for, *if any man do his will, he shall know* for certain that the doctrine is of God, ~~John~~ John 7:17.

(3.) That we may be useful and serviceable to others for their instruction: “*That thou mayest give a good account of the words of truth to those that send to thee* to consult thee as an oracle,” or (as the margin reads it) “*to those that send thee*, that employ thee as an agent or ambassador in any business.” Knowledge is given us to do good with, that others may light their candle at our lamp, and that we may in our place serve our generation according to the will of God; and those who make conscience of keeping God's commandments will be best able to *give a reason of the hope that is in them*.

~~1222~~ PROVERBS 22:22-23

CAUTION AGAINST OPPRESSING THE POOR

After this solemn preface, one would have expected something new and surprising; but no; here is a plain and common, but very needful caution against the barbarous and inhuman practices of oppressing poor people. Observe,

I. The sin itself, and that is *robbing the poor* and making them poorer, taking from those that have but little to lose and so leaving them nothing. It is bad to rob any man, but most absurd to rob the poor, whom we should relieve, — to squeeze those with our power whom we should water with our bounty, — *to oppress the afflicted*, and so to add affliction to them, — to give judgment against them, and so to patronise those that do rob them, which is as bad as if we robbed them ourselves. Rich men will not suffer themselves to be wronged; poor men cannot help themselves, and therefore we ought to be the more careful not to wrong them.

II. The aggravations of the sin.

1. If their inability, by reason of their poverty, to right themselves, embolden us to rob them, it is so much the worse; this is *robbing the poor because he is poor*; this is not only a base and cowardly thing, to take advantage against a man because he is helpless, but it is unnatural, and proves men worse than beasts.

2. Or, if it be done under the colour of law and justice, that is oppressing *the afflicted in the gate*, where they ought to be protected from wrong and to have justice done them against those that oppress them.

III. The danger that attends this sin. He that robs and oppresses the poor does it at his peril; for,

1. The oppressed will find God their powerful patron. He *will plead their cause*, and not suffer them to be run down and trampled upon. If men will not appear for them, God will.

2. The oppressors will find him a just avenger. He will make reprisals upon them, will *spoil the souls of those that spoil them*; he will repay them in spiritual judgments, in curses to their souls. He that robs the poor will be found in the end a murderer of himself.

PROVERBS 22:24-25

PRUDENTIAL MAXIMS

Here is,

1. A good caution against being intimate with a passionate man. It is the law of friendship that we accommodate ourselves to our friends and be ready to serve them, and therefore we ought to be wise and wary in the choice of a friend, that we come not under the sacred tie to any one whom it would be our folly to accommodate ourselves to. Thought we must be civil to all, yet we must be careful whom we lay in our bosoms and contract a familiarity with. And, among others, a man who is easily provoked, touchy, and apt to resent affronts, who, when he is in a passion, cares not what he says or does, but grows outrageous, such a one is not fit to be made a friend or companion, for he will be ever and anon angry with us and that will be our trouble, and he will expect that we should, like him, be angry with others, and that will be our sin.

2. Good cause given for this caution: *Lest thou learn his way.* Those we go with we are apt to grow like. Our corrupt hearts have so much tinder in them that it is dangerous conversing with those that throw about the sparks of their passion. We shall thereby *get a snare to our souls*, for a disposition to anger is a great snare to any man, and an occasion of much sin. He does not say, “Lest thou have ill language given thee or get a broken head,” but, which is must worse, “Lest thou imitate him, to humour him, and so contract an ill habit.”

~~4126~~ PROVERBS 22:26-27

PRUDENTIAL MAXIMS

We have here, as often before, a caution against suretiship, as a thing both imprudent and unjust.

1. We must not associate ourselves, nor contract an intimacy, with men of broken fortunes, and reputations, who need and will urge their friends to be bound for them, that they may cheat their neighbours to feed their lusts, and by keeping up a little longer may do the more damage at last to those that give them credit. Have nothing to do with such; be not thou among them.

2. We must not cheat people of their money, by *striking hands* ourselves, or *becoming surety for others*, when we *have not to pay*. If a man by the divine providence is disabled to pay his debts, he ought to be pitied and

helped; but he that takes up money or goods himself, or is bound for another, when he knows that he has not wherewithal to pay, or that what he has is so settled that the creditors cannot come at it, does in effect pick his neighbour's pocket, and though, in all cases, compassion is to be used, yet he may thank himself if the law have its course and his *bed* be *taken from under him*, which might be taken for a pledge to secure a debt, ~~1225~~Exodus 22:26, 27. For, if a man appeared to be so poor that he had nothing else to give for security, he ought to be relieved, and it was honestly done to own it; but, for the recovery of a debt, it seems it might be taken by the *summum jus* — *the strict operation of law*.

3. We must not ruin our own estates and families. Every man ought to be just to himself and to his wife and children; those are not so who live above what they have, who by the mismanagement of their own affairs, or by encumbering themselves with debts of others, waste what they have and bring themselves to poverty. We may *take joyfully the spoiling of our goods* if it be for the testimony of a good conscience; but, if be for our own rashness and folly, we cannot but take it heavily.

~~1225~~ PROVERBS 22:28

PRUDENTIAL MAXIMS

1. We are here taught not to invade another man's right, though we can find ways of doing it ever so secretly and plausibly, clandestinely and by fraud, without any open force. Let not property in general be entrenched upon, by robbing men of their liberties and privileges, or of any just ways of maintaining them. Let not the property of particular persons be encroached upon. The land-marks, or meer-stones, are standing witnesses to every man's right; let not those be removed quite away, for thence come wars, and fightings, and endless disputes; let them not be removed so as to take from thy neighbour's lot to thy own, for that is downright robbing him and entailing the fraud upon posterity.

2. We may infer hence that a deference is to be paid, in all civil matters, to usages that have prevailed time out of mind and the settled constitutions of government, in which it becomes us to acquiesce, lest an attempt to change it, under pretence of changing it for the better, prove of dangerous consequence.

~~1729~~ PROVERBS 22:29

PRUDENTIAL MAXIMS

Here is,

- 1.** A plain intimation what a hard thing it is to find a truly ingenious industrious man: “*Seest thou a man diligent in his business?* Thou wilt not see many such, so epidemical are dulness and slothfulness.” He is here commended who lays out himself to get business, though it be but in a very low and narrow sphere, and is not easy when he is out of business, who loves business, is quick and active in it, and goes through it, not only with constancy and resolution, but with dexterity and expedition, a man of despatch, who knows how to bring a deal of business into a little compass.
- 2.** A moral prognostication of the preferment of such a man; though now he *stands before mean men*, is employed by them and attends upon them, yet he will rise, and is likely enough to *stand before kings*, as an ambassador to foreign kings or prime-minister of state to his own. *Seest thou a man diligent* in the business of religion? He is likely to excel in virtue, and shall stand before the King of kings.