

CHAPTER 28

PROVERBS 28:1

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

See here,

1. What continual frights those are subject to that go on in wicked ways. Guilt in the conscience makes men a terror to themselves, so that they are ready *to flee when none pursues*; like one that absconds for debt, who thinks every one he meets a bailiff. Though they pretend to be easy, there are secret fears which haunt them wherever they go, so that they fear where no present or imminent danger is, ^{<1815>}Psalm 53:5. Those that have made God their enemy, and know it, cannot but see the whole creation at war with them, and therefore can have no true enjoyment of themselves, no confidence, no courage, but a *fearful looking for of judgment*. Sin makes men cowards.

*Degeneres animos timor arguit —
Fear argues a degenerate soul. — Virgil*

*Quos diri conscia facti mens habet attonitos —
The consciousness of atrocious crimes astonishes
and confounds. — Juvenal*

If they flee when none pursues, what will they do when they shall see God himself pursuing them with his armies? ^{<1814>}Job 20:24; 15:24. See ^{<1815>}Deuteronomy 28:25; ^{<1816>}Leviticus 26:36.

2. What a holy security and serenity of mind those enjoy who *keep conscience void of offence* and so keep themselves in the love of God: *The righteous are bold as a lion*, as a young lion; in the greatest dangers they have a God of almighty power to trust to. *Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed*. Whatever difficulties they meet with in the way of their duty, they are not daunted by them. *None of those things move me*.

Hie murus aeneus esto, nil conscire sibi —

*Be this thy brazen bulwark of defence,
Still to preserve thy conscious innocence. — Hon*

~~<116>~~ PROVERBS 28:2

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. National sins bring national disorders and the disturbance of the public repose: *For the transgression of a land*, and a general defection from God and religion to idolatry, profaneness, or immorality, *many are the princes thereof*, many at the same time pretending to the sovereignty and contending for it, by which the people are crumbled into parties and factions, biting and devouring one another, or many successively, in a little time, one cutting off another, as ~~<116>~~ 1 Kings 16:8, etc., or soon cut off by the hand of God or of a foreign enemy, as ~~<121>~~ 2 Kings 24:5, etc. As the people suffer for the sins of the prince,

Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi —

Kings play the madmen, and their people suffer for it,

so the government sometimes suffers for the sins of the people.

2. Wisdom will prevent or redress these grievances: *By a man*, that is, by a people, *of understanding*, that come again to themselves and their right mind, things are kept in a good order, or, if disturbed, brought back to the old channel again. Or, *By a prince of understanding and knowledge*, a privy-counsellor, or minister of state, that will restrain or suppress *the transgression of the land*, and take the right methods of healing the state thereof, the good estate of it will be prolonged. We cannot imagine what a great deal of service one wise man may do to a nation in a critical juncture.

~~183~~ PROVERBS 28:3

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

See here,

1. How hard-hearted poor people frequently are to one another, not only not doing such good offices as they might do one to another, but imposing upon and over-reaching one another. Those who know by experience the miseries of poverty should be compassionate to those who suffer the like, but they are inexcusably barbarous if they be injurious to them.

2. How imperious and griping those commonly are who, being indigent and necessitous, get into power. If a prince prefer a poor man, he forgets that ever he was poor, and none shall be so oppressive to the poor as he, nor squeeze them so cruelly. The hungry leech and the dry sponge suck most. *Set a beggar on horseback, and he will ride without mercy. He is like a sweeping rain, which washes away the corn in the ground, and lays and beats out that which has grown, so that it leaves no food.* Princes therefore ought not to put those into places of trust who are poor, and in debt, and behind-hand in the world, nor any who make it their main business to enrich themselves.

~~184~~ PROVERBS 28:4

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. Those that *praise the wicked* make it to appear that they do themselves *forsake the law*, and go contrary to it, for that curses and condemns the wicked. Wicked people will speak well of one another, and so strengthen one another's hands in their wicked ways, hoping thereby to silence the clamours of their own consciences and to serve the interests of the devil's kingdom, which is not done by any thing so effectually as by keeping vice in reputation.

2. Those that do indeed make conscience of the law of God themselves will, in their places, vigorously oppose sin, and bear their testimony

against it, and do what they can to shame and suppress it. They will reprove the works of darkness, and silence the excuses which are made for those works, and do what they can to bring gross offenders to punishment, that others may hear and fear.

~~<INT>~~ PROVERBS 28:5

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

I. As the prevalency of men's lusts is owing to the darkness of their understandings, so the darkness of their understandings is very much owing to the dominion of their lusts: *Men understand not judgment, discern not between truth and falsehood, right and wrong; they understand not the law of God as the rule either of their duty or of their doom; and,*

1. *Therefore* it is that they are *evil men*; their wickedness is the effect of their ignorance and error, ~~<INT>~~ Ephesians 4:18.

2. *Therefore* they *understand not judgment*, because they are *evil men*; their corruptions blind their eyes, and fill them with prejudices, and because they do evil they *hate the light*. It is just with God also to *give them up to strong delusions*.

II. As men's *seeking the Lord* is a good sign that they do understand much, so it is a good means of their understanding more, even of their understanding all things needful for them. Those that set God's glory before them as their end, his favour as their felicity, and his word as their rule, and apply to him upon all occasions by prayer, *they seek the Lord*, and he will give them the spirit of wisdom. If a man *do his will*, he shall *know his doctrine*, ~~<INT>~~ John 7:17. A *good understanding* those have, and a better they shall have, that *do his commandments*, ~~<INT>~~ Psalm 111:10; ~~<INT>~~ 1 Corinthians 2:12, 15.

~~<186>~~ PROVERBS 28:6

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here,

1. It is supposed that a man may *walk in his uprightness* and yet be poor in this world, which is a temptation to dishonesty, and yet may resist the temptation and continue to *walk in his uprightness* — also that a man may be *perverse in his ways*, injurious to God and man, and yet be rich, and prosper in the world, for a while, may be rich, and so lie under great obligations and have great opportunities to do good, and yet be *perverse in his ways* and do a great deal of hurt.

2. It is maintained as a paradox to a blind world that an honest, godly, poor man, is better than a wicked, ungodly, rich man, has a better character, is in a better condition, has more comfort in himself, is a greater blessing to the world, and is worthy of much more honour and respect. It is not only certain that his case will be better at death, but it is better in life. When Aristides was by a rich man upbraided with his poverty he answered, *Thy riches do thee more hurt than my poverty does me.*

~~<187>~~ PROVERBS 28:7

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. Religion is true wisdom, and it makes men wise in every relation. He that conscientiously *keeps the law* is wise, and he will be particularly *a wise son*, that is, will act discreetly towards his parents, for the law of God teaches him to do so.

2. Bad company is a great hindrance to religion. Those that are *companions of riotous men*, that choose such for their companions and delight in their conversation, will certainly be drawn from *keeping the law of God* and drawn to transgress it, ~~<188>~~ Psalm 119:115.

3. Wickedness is not only a reproach to the sinner himself, but to all that are akin to him. He that keeps rakish company, and spends his time and money with them, not only grieves his parents, but shames them; it turns to their disrepute, as if they had not done their duty to him. They are ashamed that a child of theirs should be scandalous and abusive to their neighbours.

~~PROV~~ PROVERBS 28:8

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. That which is ill-got, though it may increase much, will not last long. A man may perhaps raise a great estate, in a little time, by usury and extortion, fraud, and oppression of the poor, but it will not continue; he gathers it for himself, but it shall prove to have been gathered for somebody else that he has no kindness for. His estate shall go to decay, and another man's shall be raised out of the ruins of it.

2. Sometimes God in his providence so orders it that that which one got unjustly another uses charitably; it is strangely turned into the hands of one *that will pity the poor* and do good with it, and so cut off the entail of the curse which he brought upon it who got it by deceit and violence. Thus the same Providence that punishes the cruel, and disables them to do any more hurt, rewards the merciful, and enables them to do so much the more good. *To him that has the ten pounds give the pound* which the wicked servant hid in the napkin; for *to him that has, and uses it well, more shall be given,* ~~LUKE~~ Luke 19:24. Thus the poor are repaid, the charitable are encouraged, and God is glorified.

~~PROV~~ PROVERBS 28:9

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. It is by the word and prayer that our communion with God is kept up. God speaks to us by his law, and expects we should hear him and heed him; *we* speak to him by prayer, to which we wait for an answer of peace. How reverent and serious should we be, whenever we are hearing from and speaking to the Lord of glory!

2. If God's word be not regarded by us, our prayers shall not only not be accepted of God, but they shall be an abomination to him, not only our sacrifices, which were ceremonial appointments, but even our prayers, which are moral duties, and which, when they are put up by the upright, are so much his delight. See ^{<2011>}Isaiah 1:11, 15. The sinner whose prayers God is thus angry at is one who wilfully and obstinately refuses to obey God's commandments, who will not so much as give them the hearing, but causes his *ear to decline the law*, and refuses when God calls; God will therefore justly refuse him when he calls. See ^{<2012>}Proverbs 1:24, 28.

~~<180>~~ PROVERBS 28:10

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here is,

1. The doom of seducers, who attempt to draw good people, or those who profess to be such, into sin and mischief, who take pride in *causing the righteous to go astray in an evil way*, in drawing them into a snare, that they may insult over them. They shall not gain their point; it is impossible to deceive the elect. But they shall *fall themselves into their own pit*; and having been not only sinners, but tempters, not only unrighteous, but enemies to the righteous, their condemnation will be so much the greater, ^{<2014>}Matthew 23:14, 15.

2. The happiness of the sincere. They shall not only be preserved from the evil way which the wicked would decoy them into, but they shall *have good things*, the best things, *in possession*, the graces and comforts of God's Spirit, besides what they have in reversion.

END PROVERBS 28:11

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. Those that are rich are apt to think themselves wise, because, whatever else they are ignorant of, they know how to get and save; and those that are purse-proud expect that all they say should be regarded as an oracle and a law, and that none should dare to contradict them, but every sheaf bow to theirs; this humour is fed by flatterers, who, because (like Jezebel's prophets) they are fed at their table, cry up their wisdom.
2. Those that are poor often prove themselves wiser than they: A *poor man*, who has taken pains to get wisdom, having no other way (as the rich man has) to get a reputation, *searches him out*, and makes it to appear that he is not such a scholar, nor such a politician, as he is taken to be. See how variously God dispenses his gifts; to some he gives wealth, to others wisdom, and it is easy to say which of these is the better gift, which we should *covet more earnestly*.

END PROVERBS 28:12

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. The comfort of the people of God is the honour of the nation in which they live. There is a *great glory* dwelling in the land when *the righteous do rejoice*, when they have their liberty, the free exercise of their religion, and are not persecuted, when the government countenances them and speaks comfortably to them, when they prosper and grow rich, and, much more, when they are preferred and employed and have power put into their hands.
2. The advancement of the wicked is the eclipsing of the beauty of a nation: *When the wicked rise* and get head they make head against all that is sacred, and then *a man is hidden*, a good man is thrust into obscurity, is necessitated to abscond for his own safety; corruptions prevail so generally

that, as in Elijah's time, there seem to be no good men left, the *wicked walk* so thickly *on every side*.

~~283~~ PROVERBS 28:13

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here is,

1. The folly of indulging sin, of palliating and excusing it, denying or extenuating it, diminishing it, dissembling it, or throwing the blame of it upon others: *He that thus covers his sins shall not prosper*, let him never expect it. He shall not succeed in his endeavour to cover his sin, for it will be discovered, sooner or later. *There is nothing hid which shall not be revealed. A bird of the air shall carry the voice.* Murder will out, and so will other sins. He *shall not prosper*, that is, he shall not obtain the pardon of his sin, nor can he have any true peace of conscience. David owns himself to have been in a constant agitation while he *covered his sins*, ~~283~~ Psalm 32:3, 4. While the patient conceals his distemper he cannot expect a cure.

2. The benefit of parting with it, both by a penitent confession and a universal reformation: *He that confesses his guilt to God, and is careful not to return to sin again, shall find mercy with God, and shall have the comfort of it in his own bosom.* His conscience shall be eased and his ruin prevented. See ~~283~~ 1 John 1:9; ~~283~~ Jeremiah 3:12, 13. When we set sin before our face (as David, *My sin is ever before me*) God casts it behind his back.

~~284~~ PROVERBS 28:14

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here is,

1. The benefit of a holy caution. It sounds strangely, but it is very true: *Happy is the man that feareth always.* Most people think that those are happy who never fear; but there is a fear which is so far from having

torment in it that it has in it the greatest satisfaction. Happy is the man who always keeps up in his mind a holy awe and reverence of God, his glory, goodness, and government, who is always afraid of offending God and incurring his displeasure, who keeps conscience tender and has a dread of the appearance of evil, who is always jealous of himself, distrustful of his own sufficiency, and lives in expectation of troubles and changes, so that, whenever they come, they are no surprise to him. He who keeps up such a fear as this will live a life of faith and watchfulness, and therefore happy is he, blessed and holy.

2. The danger of a sinful presumption: *He that hardens his heart*, that mocks at fear, and sets God and his judgments at defiance, and receives not the impressions of his word or rod, *shall fall into mischief*; his presumption will be his ruin, and whatever sin (which is the greatest mischief) he falls into it is owing to the hardness of his heart.

PROVERBS 28:15

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

It is written indeed, *Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people*; but if he be a wicked ruler, that oppresses the people, especially the poor people, robbing them of the little they have and making a prey of them, whatever we may call him, this scripture calls him *a roaring lion and a ranging bear*.

1. In respect of his character. He is brutish, barbarous, and blood-thirsty; he is rather to be put among the beasts of prey, the wildest and most savage, than to be reckoned of that noble rank of beings whose glory is reason and humanity.

2. In respect of the mischief he does to his subjects. He is dreadful as the *roaring lion*, who makes the forest tremble; he is devouring as a hungry *bear*, and the more necessitous he is the more mischief he does and the more greedy of gain he is.

<136> PROVERBS 28:16

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Two things are here intimated to be the causes of the mal-administration of princes: —

1. The love of money, that *root of all evil*; for *hating covetousness* here stands opposed to *oppression*, according to Moses's character of good magistrates, *men fearing God and hating covetousness* (<132>Exodus 18:21), not only not being covetous, but hating it, and shaking the hands from the holding of bribes. A ruler that is covetous will neither do justly nor love mercy, but the people under him shall be bought and sold.
2. Want of consideration: *He that hates covetousness shall prolong* his government and peace, shall be happy in the affections of his people and the blessing of his God. It is as much the interest as the duty of princes to reign in righteousness. Oppressors therefore and tyrants are the greatest fools in the world; they *want understanding*; they do not consult their own honour, ease, and safety, but sacrifice all to their ambition of an absolute and arbitrary power. They might be much happier in the hearts of their subjects than in their necks or estates.

<137> PROVERBS 28:17

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

This agrees with that ancient law, *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed* (<136>Genesis 9:6), and proclaims,

1. The doom of the shedder of blood. He that has committed murder, though he flees for his life, shall be continually haunted with terrors, shall himself *flee to the pit*, betray himself, and torment himself, like Cain, who, when he had killed his brother, became a fugitive and a vagabond, and trembled continually.
2. The duty of the avenger of blood, whether the magistrate or the next of kin, or whoever are concerned in making inquisition for blood, let them be close and vigorous in the prosecution, and let it not be bought off. Those

that acquit the murderer, or do any thing to help him off, come in sharers in the guilt of blood; nor can the land be purged from blood but by the blood of him that shed it, ~~<18>~~Numbers 35:33.

~~<18>~~PROVERBS 28:18

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. Those that are honest are always safe. He that acts with sincerity, that speaks as he thinks, has a single eye, in every thing, to the glory of God and the good of his brethren, that would not, for a world, do an unjust thing if he knew it, that in all manner of conversation *walks uprightly*, he *shall be saved* hereafter. We find a glorious company of those *in whose mouth was found no guile*, ~~<14>~~Revelation 14:5. They shall be safe now. Integrity and uprightness will preserve men, will give them a holy security in the worst of times; for it will preserve their comfort, their reputation, and all their interests. They may be injured, but they cannot be hurt.

2. Those that are false and dishonest are never safe: *He that is perverse in his ways*, that thinks to secure himself by fraudulent practices, by dissimulation and treachery, or by an estate ill-got, he *shall fall*, nay, he *shall fall at once*, not gradually, and with warning given, but suddenly, without previous notice, for he is least safe when he is most secure. He *falls at once*, and so has neither time to guard against his ruin nor to provide for it; and, being a surprise upon him, it will be so much the greater terror to him.

~~<18>~~PROVERBS 28:19

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. Those that are diligent in their callings take the way to live comfortably: He that *tills his land*, and tends his shop, and minds his business, whatever it is, he *shall have plenty of bread*, of that which is necessary for himself

and his family and with which he may be charitable to the poor; he shall *eat the labour of his hands*.

2. Those that are idle, and careless, and company-keepers, though they indulge themselves in living (as they think) easily and pleasantly, they take the way to live miserably. He that has land and values himself upon that, but does not till it, but *follows after vain persons*, drinks with them, joins with them in their frolics and vain sports, and idles away his time with him, he shall have *poverty enough*, shall be *satiated* or *replenished* with poverty (so the word is); he takes those courses which lead so directly to it that he seems to court it, and he shall have his fill of it.

PROVERBS 28:20

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here,

1. We are directed in the true way to be happy, and that is to be holy and honest. He that is *faithful* to God and man shall be blessed of the Lord, and he *shall abound with blessings* of the upper and nether springs. Men shall praise him, and pray for him, and be ready to do him any kindness. He shall abound in doing good, and shall himself be a blessing to the place where he lives. Usefulness shall be the reward of faithfulness, and it is a good reward.

2. We are cautioned against a false and deceitful way to happiness, and that is, right or wrong, raising an estate suddenly. Say not, This is the way to *abound with blessings*, for *he that makes haste to be rich*, more haste than good speed, *shall not be innocent*; and, if he be not, he shall not be blessed of God, but rather bring a curse upon what he has; nor, if he be not innocent, can he long be easy to himself; he shall not be accounted innocent by his neighbours, but shall have their ill will and ill word. He does not say that he *cannot be innocent*, but there is all the probability in the world that he will not prove so: *He that hasteth with his feet sinneth, stumbleth, falleth. Sed quae reverentia legum, quis metus, aut pudor, est unquam properantis avari? — What reverence for law, what fear, what shame, was ever indicated by an avaricious man hastening to be rich?*

~~182~~ PROVERBS 28:21

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. It is a fundamental error in the administration of justice, and that which cannot but lead men to abundance of transgression, to consider the parties concerned more than the merits of the cause, so as to favour one because he is a gentleman, a scholar, my countryman, my old acquaintance, has formerly done me a kindness, or may do me one, or is of my party and persuasion, and to bear hard on the other party because he is a stranger, a poor man, has done me an ill turn, is or has been my rival, or is not of my mind, or has voted against me. Judgment is perverted when any consideration of this kind is admitted into the scale, any thing but pure right.

2. Those that are partial will be paltry. Those that have once broken through the bonds of equity, though, at first, it must be some great bribe, some noble present, that would bias them, yet, when they have debauched their consciences, they will, at length, be so sordid that *for a piece of bread* they will give judgment against their consciences; they will rather play at small game than sit out.

~~182~~ PROVERBS 28:22

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here again Solomon shows the sin and folly of those that will *be rich*; they are resolved that they will be so, *per fas, per nefas* — *right or wrong*; they will be so with all speed; they are getting hastily an estate.

1. They have no comfort in it: They *have an evil eye*, that is, they are always grieving at those that have more than they, and always grudging their necessary expenses, because they think the former keep them from seeming rich, the latter from being so, and between both they must needs be perpetually uneasy.

2. They have no assurance of the continuance of it, and yet take no thought to provide against the loss of it: *Poverty shall come upon* them, and the riches which they made wings for, that they might fly to them, will make themselves wings to fly from them; but they are secure and improvident, and do *not consider* this, that while they are making *haste to be rich* they are really making haste to be poor, else they would not *trust to uncertain riches*.

~~183~~ PROVERBS 28:23

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. Flatterers may please those for a time who, upon second thoughts, will detest and despise them. If ever they come to be convinced of the evil of those sinful courses they were flattered in, and to be ashamed of the pride and vanity which were humoured and gratified by those flatteries, they will hate the fawning flatterers as having had an ill design upon them, and the fulsome flatteries as having had an ill effect upon them and become nauseous.

2. Reprovers may displease those at first who yet afterwards, when the passion is over and the bitter physic begins to work well, will love and respect them. He that deals faithfully with his friend, in telling him of his faults, though he may put him into some heat for the present, and perhaps have hard words, instead of thanks, for his pains, yet afterwards he will not only have the comfort in his own bosom of having done his duty, but he also whom he reprov'd will acknowledge that it was a kindness, will entertain a high opinion of his wisdom and faithfulness, and look upon him as fit to be a friend. He that cries out against his surgeon for hurting him when he is searching his wound will yet pay him well, and thank him too, when he has cured it.

~~1824~~ PROVERBS 28:24

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

As Christ shows the absurdity and wickedness of those children who think it is no duty, in some cases, to maintain their parents (~~1815~~ Matthew 15:5), so Solomon here shows the absurdity and wickedness of those who think it is no sin to rob their parents, either by force or secretly, by wheedling them or threatening them, or by wasting what they have, and (which is no better than robbing them) running into debt and leaving them to pay it. Now,

1. This is commonly made light of by untoward children; they say, “*It is no transgression*, for it will be our own shortly, our parents can well enough spare it, we have occasion for it, we cannot live as gentlemen upon the allowance our parents give us, it is too strait for us.” With such excuses as these they endeavour to shift off the conviction. But,
2. How lightly soever an ungoverned youth makes of it, it is really a very great sin; he that does it *is the companion of a destroyer*, no better than a robber on the highway. What wickedness will he scruple to commit who will rob his own parents?

~~1825~~ PROVERBS 28:25

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Note,

1. Those make themselves lean, and continually unquiet, that are haughty and quarrelsome, for they are opposed to those that *shall be made fat*: *He that is of a proud heart*, that is conceited of himself and looks with a contempt upon all about him, that cannot bear either competition or contradiction, he *stirs up strife*, makes mischief, and creates disturbance to himself and every body else.
2. Those make themselves fat, and always easy, that live in a continual dependence upon God and his grace: *He who puts his trust in the Lord*, who, instead of struggling for himself, commits his cause to God, *shall be*

made fat. He saves the money which others spend upon their pride and contentiousness; he enjoys himself, and has abundant satisfaction in his God; and thus his soul dwells at ease, and he is most likely to have plenty of outward good things. None live so easily, so pleasantly, as those who live by faith.

~~28:26~~ PROVERBS 28:26

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here is,

- 1.** The character of a fool: *He trusts to his own heart*, to his own wisdom and counsels, his own strength and sufficiency, his own merit and righteousness, and the good opinion he has of himself; he that does so *is a fool*, for he trusts to that, not only which *is deceitful above all things* (~~2479~~ Jeremiah 17:9), but which has often deceived him. This implies that it is the character of a wise man (as before, v. 25) to *put his trust in the Lord*, and in his power and promise, and to follow his guidance, ~~2835~~ Proverbs 3:5, 6.
- 2.** The comfort of a wise man: He that *walks wisely*, that trusts not to his own heart, but is humble and self-diffident, and goes on in the strength of the Lord God, *he shall be delivered*; when the fool, *that trusts in his own heart*, shall be destroyed.

~~28:27~~ PROVERBS 28:27

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

Here is,

- 1.** A promise to the charitable: *He that gives to the poor* shall himself be never the poorer for so doing; he *shall not lack*. If he have but little, and so be in danger of lacking, let him give out of his little, and that will prevent it from coming to nothing; as the bounty of the widow of Sarepta to Elijah (for whom she made a little cake first) saved what she had, when it was reduced to a handful of meal. If he have much, let him give much out of it,

and that will prevent its growing less; he and his shall not want what is given in pious charity. What we gave we have.

2. A threatening to the uncharitable: *He that hides his eyes*, that he may not see the miseries of the poor nor read their petitions, lest his eye should affect his heart and extort some relief from him, he *shall have many a curse*, both from God and man, and neither causeless, and therefore they shall come. Woeful is the condition of that man who has the word of God and the prayers of the poor against him.

~~183~~ PROVERBS 28:28

MISCELLANEOUS MAXIMS

This is to the same purport with what we had, v. 12.

1. When bad men are preferred, that which is good is clouded and run down. When power is put into the hands of *the wicked, men hide themselves*; wise men retire into privacy, and decline public business, not caring to be employed under them; rich men get out of the way, for fear of being squeezed for what they have; and, which is worst of all, good men abscond, despairing to do good and fearing to be persecuted and ill-treated.

2. When bad men are disgraced, degraded, and their power taken from them, then that which is good revives again, then *the righteous increase*; for, *when they perish*, good men will be put in their room, who will, by their example and interest, countenance religion and righteousness. It is well with a land when the number of good people increases in it; and it is therefore the policy of all princes, states, and potentates, to encourage them and to take special care of the good education of youth.