

CHAPTER 13

13:1 PROVERBS 13:1

MORAL MAXIMS

Among the children of the same parents it is no new thing for some to be hopeful and others the contrary; now here we are taught to distinguish.

1. There is great hope of those that have a reverence for their parents, and are willing to be advised and admonished by them. He is *a wise son*, and is in a far way to be wiser, that *hears his father's instruction*, desires to hear it, regards it, and complies with it, and does not merely give it the hearing.
2. There is little hope of those that will not so much as *hear rebuke* with any patience, but scorn to submit to government and scoff at those that deal faithfully with them. How can those mend a fault who will not be told of it, but count those their enemies who do them that kindness?

13:2 PROVERBS 13:2

MORAL MAXIMS

Note,

1. If that which comes from within, out of the heart, be good, and from a good treasure, it will return with advantage. Inward comfort and satisfaction will be daily bread; nay, it will be a continual feast to those who delight in that communication which is *to the use of edifying*.
2. Violence done will recoil in the face of him that does it: *The soul of the transgressors* that harbours and plots mischief, and vents it by word and deed, *shall eat violence*; they shall have their belly full of it. *Reward her as she has rewarded thee*, 6816 Revelation 18:6. Every man shall drink as he brews, eat as he speaks; for by our words we must be justified or

condemned, ^{<123>}Matthew 12:37. As our fruit is, so will our food be,
^{<462>}Romans 6:21, 22.

^{<113>}PROVERBS 13:3

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Note,

1. A guard upon the lips is a guard to the soul. He that is cautious, that thinks twice before he speaks once, that, if he have *thought evil*, *lays his hand upon his mouth* to suppress it, that keeps a strong bridle on his tongue and a strict hand on that bridle, he *keeps his soul* from a great deal both of guilt and grief and saves himself the trouble of many bitter reflections on himself and reflections of others upon him.

2. There is many a one ruined by an ungoverned tongue: *He that opens widely his lips*, to let our *quod in buccam venerit* — *whatever comes uppermost*, that loves to bawl, and bluster, and make a noise, and affects such a liberty of speech as bids defiance both to God and man, he *shall have destruction*. it will be the destruction of his reputation, his interest, his comfort, and his soul for ever, ^{<306>}James 3:6.

^{<113>}PROVERBS 13:4

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Here is,

1. The misery and shame of the slothful. See how foolish and absurd they are; they desire the gains which the diligent get, but they hate the pains which the diligent take; they covet every thing that is to be coveted, but will do nothing that is to be done; and therefore it follows, They have nothing; for he that will not labour let him hunger, and let him not *eat*, ^{<380>}2 Thessalonians 3:10. *The desire of the slothful*, which should be his excitement, is his torment, which should make him busy, makes him always uneasy, and is really a greater toil to him than labour would be.

2. The happiness and honour of the diligent: Their *soul shall be made fat*; they shall have abundance, and shall have the comfortable enjoyment of it, and the more for its being the fruit of their diligence. This is especially true in spiritual affairs. Those that rest in idle wishes know not what the advantages of religion are; whereas those that take pains in the service of God find both the pleasure and profit of it.

PROVERBS 13:5

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Note,

1. Where grace reigns sin is loathsome. It is the undoubted character of every *righteous man* that he *hates lying* (that is, all sin, for every sin is a lie, and particularly all fraud and falsehood in commerce and conversation), not only that he will not tell a lie, but he abhors lying, from a rooted reigning principle of love to truth and justice, and conformity to God.

2. Where sin reigns the *man is loathsome*. If his eyes were opened, and his conscience awakened, he would be so to himself, he would *abhor himself and repent in dust and ashes*; however, he is so to God and all good men; particularly, he makes himself so by lying, than which there is nothing more detestable. And, though he may think to face it out awhile, yet he will *come to shame* and contempt at last and will blush to show his face, Daniel 12:2.

PROVERBS 13:6

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

See here,

1. Saints secured from ruin. Those that are *upright in their way*, that mean honestly in all their actions, adhere conscientiously to the sacred and eternal rules of equity, and deal sincerely both with God and man, their integrity will keep them from the temptations of Satan, which shall not

prevail over them, the reproaches and injuries of evil men, which shall not fasten upon them, to do them any real mischief, ~~2M1~~ Psalm 25:21.

Hic murus aheneus esto, nil conscire sibi.

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

2. Sinners secured for ruin. Those that are wicked, even their wickedness will be their overthrow at last, and they are held in the cords of it in the mean time. Are they corrected, destroyed? It is their own wickedness that corrects them, that destroys them; they alone shall bear it.

~~2M1~~ PROVERBS 13:7

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

This observation is applicable,

I. To men's worldly estate. The world is a great cheat, not only the things of the world, but the men of the world. *All men are liars.* Here is an instance in two sore evils under the sun: —

1. Some that are really poor would be thought to be rich and are thought to be so; they trade and spend as if they were rich, make a great bustle and a great show as if they had hidden treasures, when perhaps, if all their debts were paid, they are not worth a groat. This is sin, and will be shame; many a one hereby ruins his family and brings reproach upon his profession of religion. Those that thus live above what they have choose to be subject to their own pride rather than to God's providence, and it will end accordingly.

2. Some that are really rich would be thought to be poor, and are thought to be so, because they sordidly and meanly live below what God has given them, and choose rather to bury it than to use it, ~~2M1~~ Ecclesiastes 6:1, 2. In this there is an ingratitude to God, injustice to the family and neighbourhood, and uncharitableness to the poor.

II. To their spiritual state. Grace is the riches of the soul; it is true riches; but men commonly misrepresent themselves, either designedly or through mistake and ignorance of themselves.

1. There are many presuming hypocrites, that are really poor and empty of grace and yet either think themselves rich, and will not be convinced of their poverty, or pretend themselves rich, and will not own their poverty.
2. There are many timorous trembling Christians, that are spiritually rich, and full of grace, and yet think themselves poor, and will not be persuaded that they are rich, or, at least, will not own it; by their doubts and fears, their complaints and griefs, they *make themselves poor*. The former mistake is destroying at last; this is disquieting in the mean time.

PROVERBS 13:8

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

We are apt to judge of men's blessedness, at least in this world, by their wealth, and that they are more or less happy accordingly as they have more or less of this world's goods; but Solomon here shows what a gross mistake it is, that we may be reconciled to a poor condition, and may neither covet riches ourselves nor envy those that have abundance.

1. Those that are rich, if by some they are respected for their riches, yet, to balance that, by others they are envied and struck at, and brought in danger of their lives, which therefore they are forced to ransom with their riches. *Slay us not, for we have treasures in the field,* ²⁴¹⁸ Jeremiah 41:8. Under some tyrants, it has been crime enough to be rich; and how little is a man beholden to his wealth when it only serves to redeem that life which otherwise would not have been exposed!
2. Those that are poor, if by some, that should be their friends, they are despised and overlooked, yet, to balance that, they are also despised and overlooked by others that would be their enemies if they had any thing to lose: *The poor hear not rebuke,* are not censured, reproached, accused, nor brought into trouble, as the rich are; for nobody thinks it worth while to take notice of them. When the rich Jews were carried captives to Babylon *the poor of the land were left,* ¹²⁵¹ 2 Kings 25:12. Welcome nothing, once in seven years. *Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator — When a traveller is met by a robber he will rejoice at not having much property about him.*

~~<119>~~ PROVERBS 13:9

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Here is,

1. The comfort of good men flourishing and lasting: *The light of the righteous rejoices*, that is, it increases, and makes them glad. Even their outward prosperity is their joy, and much more those gifts, graces, and comforts, with which their souls are illuminated; these *shine more and more*, ~~<108>~~ Proverbs 4:18. The Spirit is their light, and he gives them a fulness of joy, and *rejoices to do them good*.

2. The comfort of bad men withering and dying: *The lamp of the wicked burns dimly and faint; it looks melancholy, like a taper in an urn, and it will shortly be put out* in utter darkness, ~~<201>~~ Isaiah 50:11. The light of the righteous is as that of the sun, which may be eclipsed and clouded, but will continue; that of the wicked is as a lamp of their own kindling, which will presently go out and is easily put out.

~~<110>~~ PROVERBS 13:10

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Note,

1. Foolish pride is the great make-bate. Would you know *whence come wars and fightings*? They come from this root of bitterness. Whatever hand other lusts may have in contention (passion, envy, covetousness), pride has the great hand; it is its pride that it will itself sow discord and needs no help. Pride makes men impatient of contradiction in either their opinions or their desires, impatient of competition and rivalry, impatient of contempt, or any thing that looks like a slight, and impatient of concession, and receding, from a conceit of certain right and truth on their side; and hence arise quarrels among relations and neighbours, quarrels in states and kingdoms, in churches and Christian societies. Men will be revenged, will not forgive, because they are proud.

2. Those that are humble and peaceable are wise and *well advised*. Those that will ask and take advice, that will consult their own consciences, their Bibles, their ministers, their friends, and will do nothing rashly, are wise, as in other things, so in this, that they will humble themselves, will stoop and yield, to preserve quietness and prevent quarrels.

~~1311~~ PROVERBS 13:11

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

This shows that riches wear as they are won and woven.

1. That which is won ill will never wear well, for a curse attends it which will waste it, and the same corrupt dispositions which incline men to the sinful ways of getting well incline them to the like sinful ways of spending: *Wealth gotten by vanity* will be bestowed upon vanity, and then it *will be diminished*. That which is got by such employments as are not lawful, or not becoming Christians, such as only serve to feed pride and luxury, that which is got by gaming or by the stage, may as truly be said to be *gotten by vanity* as that which is got by fraud and lying, and *will be diminished*. *De male quaesitis vix gaudet tertius haeres* — *Ill-gotten wealth will scarcely be enjoyed by the third generation*.

2. That which is got by industry and honesty will grow more, instead of growing less; it will be a maintenance; it will be an inheritance; it will be an abundance. *He that labours, working with his hands, shall so increase* as that he shall *have to give to him that needs* (~~408~~ Ephesians 4:28); and, when it comes to that, it will increase yet more and more.

~~1312~~ PROVERBS 13:12

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Note,

1. Nothing is more grievous than the disappointment of a raised expectation, though not in the thing itself by a denial, yet in the time of it by a delay: *Hope deferred makes the heart sick* and languishing, fretful

and peevish; but hope quite dashed kills the heart, and the more high the expectation was raised the more cutting is the frustration of it. It is therefore our wisdom not to promise ourselves any great matters from the creature, not to feed ourselves with any vain hopes from this world, lest we lay up matter for our own vexation; and what we do hope for let us prepare to be disappointed in, that, if it should prove so, it may prove the easier; and let us not be hasty.

2. Nothing is more grateful than to enjoy that, at last, which we have long wished and waited for: *When the desire does come* it puts men into a sort of paradise, a garden of pleasure, for *it is a tree of life*. It will aggravate the eternal misery of the wicked that their hopes will be frustrated; and it will make the happiness of heaven the more welcome to the saints that it is what they have earnestly longed for as the crown of their hopes.

PROVERBS 13:13

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Here is,

1. The character of one that is marked for ruin: He that *despises the word* of God, and has no regard to it, no veneration for it, nor will be ruled by it, certainly he *shall be destroyed*, for he slights that which is the only means of curing a destructive disease and makes himself obnoxious to that divine wrath which will certainly be his destruction. Those that prefer the rules of carnal policy before divine precepts, and the allurements of the world and the flesh before God's promises and comforts, despise his word, giving the preference to those things that stand in competition with it; and it is to their own just destruction: they would not take warning.

2. The character of one that is sure to be happy: *He that fears the commandment*, that stands in awe of God, pays a deference to his authority, has a reverence for his word, is afraid of displeasing God and incurring the penalties annexed to the commandment, shall not only escape destruction, but *shall be rewarded* for his godly fear. *In keeping the commandment there is great reward.*

PROVERBS 13:14

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

By *the law of the wise* and righteous, here, we may understand either the principles and rules by which they govern themselves or (which comes all to one) the instructions which they give to others, which ought to be as a law to all about them; and if they be so,

1. They will be constant springs of comfort and satisfaction, as *a fountain of life*, sending forth streams of living water; the closer we keep to those rules the more effectually we secure our own peace.
2. They will be constant preservatives from the temptations of Satan. Those that follow the dictates of this law will keep at a distance from the snares of sin, and so escape *the snares of death* which those run into that forsake *the law of the wise*.

PROVERBS 13:15

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

If we compare not only the end, but the way, we shall find that religion has the advantage; for,

1. The way of saints is pleasant and agreeable: *Good understanding* gains favour with God and man; our Saviour grew in that favour when he *increased in wisdom*. Those that conduct themselves prudently, and order their conversation aright in every thing, that *serve Christ in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, are *accepted of God and approved of men*, ⁴¹⁷Romans 14:17, 18. And how comfortably will that man pass through the world who is well understood and is therefore well accepted!
2. The way of sinners is rough and uneasy, and, for *this* reason, unpleasant to themselves, because unacceptable to others. It is *hard*, hard upon others, who complain of it, hard to the sinner himself, who can have little enjoyment of himself while he is doing that which is disobliging to all mankind. The service of sin is perfect slavery, and the road to hell is

strewn with the thorns and thistles that are the products of the curse. Sinners labour in the very fire.

~~13:16~~ PROVERBS 13:16

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Note,

1. It is wisdom to be cautious. *Every prudent* discreet man does all *with knowledge* (considering with himself and consulting with others), acts with deliberation and is upon the reserve, is careful not to meddle with that which he has not some knowledge of, not to launch out into business which he has not acquainted himself with, will not *deal with* those that he has not some *knowledge* of, whether they may be confided in. He is still dealing in knowledge, that he may increase the stock he has.
2. It is folly to be rash, as the *fool* is, who is forward to talk of things he knows nothing of and undertake that which he is no way fit for, and so *lays open his folly* and makes himself ridiculous. He *began to build and was not able to finish*.

~~13:17~~ PROVERBS 13:17

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Here we have,

1. The ill consequences of betraying a trust. *A wicked messenger*, who, being sent to negotiate any business, is false to him that employed him, divulges his counsels, and so defeats his designs, cannot expect to prosper, but will certainly *fall into* some *mischief* or other, will be discovered and punished, since nothing is more hateful to God and man than the treachery of those that have a confidence reposed in them.
2. The happy effects of fidelity: An *ambassador* who *faithfully* discharges his trust, and serves the interests of those who employ him, *is health*; he is health to those by whom and for whom he is employed, heals differences that are between them, and preserves a good understanding; he is health to

himself, for he secures his own interest. This is applicable to ministers, Christ's messengers and ambassadors; those that are wicked and false to Christ and the souls of men do mischief and *fall into mischief*, but those that are faithful will find sound words to be healing words to others and themselves.

~~118~~ PROVERBS 13:18

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Note,

1. He that is so proud that he scorns to be taught will certainly be abased. he that *refuses* the good *instruction* offered him, as if it were a reflection upon his honour and an abridgment of his liberty, *poverty and shame shall be to him*: he will become a beggar and live and die in disgrace; every one will despise him as foolish, and stubborn, and ungovernable.
2. He that is so humble that he takes it well to be told of his faults shall certainly be exalted: *He that regards a reproof*, whoever gives it to him, and will mend what is amiss when it is shown him, gains respect as wise and candid; he avoids that which would be a disgrace to him and is in a fair way to make himself considerable.

~~119~~ PROVERBS 13:19

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

This shows the folly of those that refuse instruction, for they might be happy and will not.

1. They might be happy. There are in man strong desires of happiness; God has provided for the accomplishment of those desires, and that would be *sweet to the soul*, whereas the pleasures of sense are grateful only to the carnal appetite. *The desire* of good men towards the favour of God and spiritual blessings brings that which *is sweet to their souls*; we know those that can say so by experience, ~~106~~ Psalm 4:6, 7.

2. Yet they will not be happy; for *it is an abomination to them to depart from evil*, which is necessary to their being happy. Never let those expect any thing truly sweet to their souls that will not be persuaded to leave their sins, but that roll them under their tongues as a sweet morsel.

~~112~~ PROVERBS 13:20

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Note,

1. Those that would be good must keep good company, which is an evidence for them that they would be good (men's character is known by the company they choose) and will be a means of making them good, of showing them the way and of quickening and encouraging them in it. He that would be himself wise must walk with those that are so, must choose such for his intimate acquaintance, and converse with them accordingly; must ask and receive instruction from them, and keep up pious and profitable talk with them. *Miss not the discourse of the elders, for they also learned of their fathers*, Ecclesiasticus 8:9. And (Ecclesiasticus 6:35), *Be willing to hear every godly discourse, and let not the parables of understanding escape thee*.

2. Multitudes are brought to ruin by bad company: *A companion of fools shall be broken* (so some), *shall be known* (so the Septuagint), known to be a fool; *noscitur ex socio* — *he is known by his company*. *He will be like them* (so some), *will be made wicked* (so others); it comes all to one, for all those, and those only, that make themselves wicked, will *be destroyed*, and those that associate with evil-doers are debauched, and so undone, and at last ascribe their death to it.

~~112~~ PROVERBS 13:21

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Here see,

1. How unavoidable the destruction of sinners is; the wrath of God pursues them, and all the terrors of that wrath: *Evil pursues* them closely wherever they go, as the avenger of blood pursued the manslayer, and they have no city of refuge to flee to; they attempt an escape, but in vain. Whom God pursues he is sure to overtake. They may prosper for a while and grow very secure, but their damnation slumbers not, though they do.

2. How indefeasible the happiness of the saints is; the God that cannot lie has engaged that *to the righteous good shall be repaid*. They shall be abundantly recompensed for all the good they have done, and all the ill they have suffered, in this world; so that, though many have been losers for their righteousness, they shall not be losers by it. Though the recompence do not come quickly, it will come in the day of payment, in the world of retribution; and it will be an abundant recompence.

~~112~~ PROVERBS 13:22

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

See here,

1. How a good man's estate lasts: He *leaves an inheritance to his children's children*. It is part of his praise that he is thoughtful for posterity, that he does not lay all out upon himself, but is in care to do well for those that come after him, not by withholding more than is meet, but by a prudent and decent frugality. He trains up his children to this, that they may leave it to their children; and especially he is careful, both by justice and charity, to obtain the blessing of God upon what he has, and to entail that blessing upon his children, without which the greatest industry and frugality will be in vain: *A good man*, by being good and doing good, by honouring the Lord with his substance and spending it in his service, secures it to his posterity; or, if he should not leave them much of this world's goods, his prayers, his instructions, his good example, will be the best entail, and the promises of the covenant will be an inheritance to his children's children, ~~113~~ Psalm 103:17.

2. How it increases by the accession of *the wealth of the sinner* to it, for that *is laid up for the just*. If it be asked, How should good men grow so rich, who are not so eager upon the world as others are and who

commonly suffer for their well-doing? It is here answered, God, in his providence, often brings into their hands that which wicked people had laid up for themselves. *The innocent shall divide the silver,* ^{<3276>}Job 27:16, 17. The Israelites shall spoil the Egyptians (^{<0126>}Exodus 12:36) and *eat the riches of the Gentiles,* ^{<3116>}Isaiah 61:6.

~~<113>~~ PROVERBS 13:23

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

See here,

1. How a small estate may be improved by industry, so that a man, by making the best of every thing, may live comfortably upon it: *Much food is in the tillage of the poor,* the poor farmers, that have but a little, but take pains with that little and husband it well. Many make it an excuse for their idleness that they have but a little to work on, a very little to be doing with; but the less compass the field is of the more let the skill and labour of the owner be employed about it, and it will turn to a very good account. Let him dig, and he needs not beg.

2. How a great estate may be ruined by indiscretion: *There is that has a great deal, but it is destroyed and brought to nothing for want of judgment,* that is, prudence in the management of it. Men over-build themselves or over-buy themselves, keep greater company, or a better table, or more servants, than they can afford, suffer what they have to go to decay and do not make the most of it; by taking up money themselves, or being bound for others, their estates are sunk, their families reduced, and all *for want of judgment.*

~~<113>~~ PROVERBS 13:24

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Note,

1. To the education of children in that which is good there is necessary a due correction of them for what is amiss; every child of ours is a child of Adam, and therefore has that foolishness bound up in its heart which calls

for rebuke, more or less, the rod and reproof which give wisdom. Observe, It is *his* rod that must be used, the rod of a parent, directed by wisdom and love, and designed for good, not the rod of a servant.

2. It is good to begin betimes with the necessary restraints of children from that which is evil, before vicious habits are confirmed. The branch is easily bent when it is tender.

3. Those really hate their children, though they pretend to be fond of them, that do not keep them under a strict discipline, and by all proper methods, severe ones when gentle ones will not serve, make them sensible of their faults and afraid of offending. They abandon them to their worst enemy, to the most dangerous disease, and therefore hate them. Let this reconcile children to the correction their good parents give them; it is from love, and for their good, ~~SAY~~ Hebrews 12:7-9.

~~135~~ PROVERBS 13:25

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Note,

1. It is the happiness of the righteous that they shall have enough and that they know when they have enough. They desire not to be surfeited, but, being moderate in their desires, they are soon satisfied. nature is content with a little and grace with less; enough is as good as a feast. Those that feed on the bread of life, that feast on the promises, meet with abundant satisfaction of soul there, eat, and are filled.

2. It is the misery of the wicked that, through the insatiableness of their own desires, they are always needy; not only their souls shall not be satisfied with the world and the flesh, but even their *belly shall want*; their sensual appetite is always craving. In hell they shall be denied a drop of water.