

TEXT — 14:1-12

1. Every wise woman buildeth her house;
But the foolish plucketh it down with her own hands.
2. He that walketh in his uprightness feareth Jehovah;
But he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.
3. In the mouth of the foolish is a rod for his pride;
But the lips of the wise shall preserve them.
4. Where no oxen are, the crib is clean;
But much increase is by the strength of the ox.
5. A faithful witness will not lie;
But a false witness uttereth lies.
6. A scoffer seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not;
But knowledge is easy unto him that hath understanding.
7. Go into the presence of a foolish man,
And thou shalt not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.
8. The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way;
But the folly of fools is deceit.
9. A trespass-offering mocketh fools;
But among the upright there is good will.
10. The heart knoweth its own bitterness;
And a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy.
11. The house of the wicked shall be overthrown;
But the tent of the upright shall flourish.
12. There is a way which seemeth right unto a man;
But the end thereof are the ways of death.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 14:1-12

1. Find the two contrasts in v. 1.
2. Name some blessings of walking uprightly (v. 2).
3. Name some blessings of being perverse (v. 2).
4. Reword the first statement in v. 3 so as to bring out its meaning.
5. What is the meaning of "clean" in v. 4?
6. We talk about, "As strong as an" (v. 4).
7. What are some of the reasons why some people bear false witness (v. 5)?
8. Why does a scoffer have trouble learning (v. 6)?
9. Are there people who you judge to be wiser than they prove to be (v. 7)?

10. What does "prudent" mean in v. 8?
11. How could a trespass-offering mock fools (v. 9)?
12. What is "good will" (v. 9)?
13. Write an elaboration on v. 10.
14. Find the triple contrast in v. 11.
15. What other verse in Proverbs restates v. 12?
16. Cite an incident in the Bible, in history, or in your own personal knowledge illustrating v. 12.

PARAPHRASE OF 14:1-12

1. A wise woman builds her house, while a foolish woman tears hers down by her own efforts.
2. To do right honors God; to sin is to despise Him
3. A rebel's foolish talk should prick his own pride! But the wise man's speech is respected.
4. An empty stable stays clean--but there is no income from an empty stable.
5. A truthful witness never lies; a false witness always lies.
6. A mocker never finds the wisdom he claims he is looking for, yet it comes easily to the man with common sense.
7. If you are looking for advice, stay away from fools.
8. The wise man looks ahead. The fool attempts to fool himself and won't face facts.
9. The common bond of rebels is their guilt. The common bond of godly people is good will.
10. Only the person involved can know his own bitterness or joy--no one else can really share it.
11. The work of the wicked will perish; the work of the godly will flourish.
12. Before every man there lies a wide and pleasant road that seems right but ends in death.

COMMENT ON 14:1-12

V. 1. People can either build or pluck down. The wise build (Prov. 24:3-5); the foolish destroy. Owners usually build and take care of things; renters often let everything run down. Rachel and Leah are said to have built the house of Israel (Ruth 4:11). Contrast the virtuous woman of Prov. 31 with the adulterous woman often pictured in the first part of Proverbs with reference to building and destroying.

V. 2. This verse deals with two classes of men just as v. 1

did with two classes of women. What a wonderful life results for both and for their offspring when "he that walketh in his uprightness" (this verse) marries the "wise woman" (v. 1)! When people properly fear God, they keep his commandments (Eccl. 12:13); when people don't fear God, evil results (Rom. 3:15-18; Gen. 20:11). "Jehovah" is the antecedent of "him" in the second statement. Those who are perverse in their ways pay no attention to God, and "the world is full of" them.

V. 3. "American Bible Union version" and "Young's Literal" give, "A rod of pride." Septuagint: "From the mouth of fools cometh a staff of insolence." The foolish can have a cruel tongue ("rod"). Other passages compare the wicked tongue to a cutting sword (Psa. 57:4; 64:3).

V. 4. The ox was used for agricultural purposes then (I Kings 19:19; Deut. 25:4). A "clean" crib meant an "empty" crib. We, too, talk of the "strength" of an ox in our saying: "As strong as an ox." Through the wise use of animal power (and now much more of mechanical power), man has been able to increase his agricultural (and other) output. Man shows that he is of a higher sphere than the animal world, for he constantly utilizes the strengths and abilities of lower forms of life to serve him.

V. 5. The one difference between a "faithful" and a "false" witness: one will lie; the other one won't. Some are "false" because it is not always easy to tell the full truth. Others are "false" on purpose (for material gain, to ruin others, etc.). The soldiers who guarded Jesus' tomb lied and were paid for it (Matt. 28:11-14). Men told lies in Jesus' trial to bring about His condemnation (Mark 14:57,58). Other passages against bearing false witness: Exo. 20:16; 23:1; Prov. 6:19; 12:17; 14:25. The apostles would neither lie nor suppress the truth about Jesus (Acts 4:18-20). Such conscientious souls are needed in every age.

V. 6. A "scoffer" is strong on his own ideas and reluctant to take the word of others. Learning is not gullible, but there is still a strong element of trust involved in learning, which the scoffer does not have. Therefore, he cuts himself off from some wisdom that he could have if he were otherwise in attitude. But it is much easier for an humble man of understanding to increase his knowledge, for he has no barrier of pride. One who has understanding easily picks up additional knowledge from what he reads, hears, studies, and is instructed in, for he can understand and comprehend what he comes in contact with. See

Prov. 9:9; 17:24.

V. 7. There is some doubt as to which rendering is correct. The "King James" has: "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge." The "American Standard" gives a truism (the foolish man has nothing to give you by his presence), but the "King James" tells you what to do about it (depart from his unprofitable presence). Enroll under teachers who know what they are talking about; doctor with those who know what they are doing; listen to religious teachers who accurately know the Bible. People would save themselves much disillusionment if they would regard this instruction.

V. 8. The prudent wisely watch every aspect of their lives (v. 15). They do not jump and then look for a place to land. They do not shoot and then investigate whether it was a deer or a man. They do not sign the contract and then study to see what they signed. And spiritually they are just as careful (Eph. 5:15). The foolish foolishly suppose they can deceive others, but seldom are they successful in their attempt.

V. 9. A trespass-offering was ordained of God if properly offered (Lev. 6:1-7), but if one thought he would "pull the wool over" God's eyes by such an offering when he intended to keep on in the trespass, he was mocked-not God (Gal. 6:7). For this reason God did not accept the acts of worship mentioned in Isa. 1:11-17. The "upright" gain the good will and favor of God by their honest dealings with themselves before Him.

V. 10. There is a portion of each person's inner-self that no one else can fully enter into. After others have sought to assuage our grief with their words lovingly administered, there is still a portion that they have not touched not known. On the other hand after we have sought to share our joys with others, we have probably enlisted their polite ears more than we have their hearts' feelings. We cannot fully communicate our joys, nor can they fully enter into our joys.

V. 11. A triple contrast: "house" vs. "tent"; "wicked" vs. "upright"; and "shall be overthrown" vs. "shall flourish". This verse blends the material found in vs. 1,2; study it until you can see this fact.

V. 12. Prov. 16:25 gives the identical statement. The importance of the truth may account for its double appearance in the book. Men are often talked into things that do not end as they expected. Sometimes people do the wrong thing when they

think they are doing the wise and desirable thing--like mice eating bait on a trap or fish eating bait on a hook. This is even true religiously (John 16:2; Acts 26:9; Rom. 10:1-3). False teachers may look like sheep even though they are ravening, devouring wolves (Matt. 7:15). Counterfeits are made to resemble the genuine. So the devil pawns off denominations started by men for the church started by Christ.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 14:1-12

1. The wise woman who builds her house and the foolish woman who tears hers down are likened to what two women in the earlier and the latter chapters of Prov.?
2. V. 2 shows what to be a motivation for uprightness?
3. What is the perverse person's attitude toward God or the idea of God (v. 2)?
4. Some passages liken a wicked tongue to a sword; what does v. 3 liken it to?
5. How was the ox used in Bible days (v. 4)?
6. What saying do we have involving the ox (v. 4)?
7. What was the case where there were no oxen (v. 4)?
8. How has man used his head for greater productive output (v. 4)?
9. How does this fact distinguish him from the animal world (v. 4)?
10. What two kinds of witnesses are there (v. 5)?
11. Why will people bear false witness (v. 5)?
12. Who said, "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard" (v. 5)?
13. Why does a scoffer sometimes cut himself off from the opportunity of learning (v. 6)?
14. Why is acquiring knowledge easy for the person who has understanding (v. 6)?
15. How does the King James and American Standard differ on v. 7?
16. How do people bring disillusionment upon themselves by not regarding v. 7?
17. What are the prudent very careful about (v. 8)?
18. Comment upon "the folly of fools in deceit" (v. 8).
19. How does a trespass-offering mock fools (v. 9)?
20. How do the upright acquire God's good will (v. 9)?
21. Comment upon v. 1.

22. What triple contrast is found in v. 11?
23. Show that v. 11 blends the material found in vs. 1,2.
24. What explanation was suggested for v. 12 and Prov. 16:25 being in the book of Proverbs since they are identical statements?
25. Illustrate the truth of v. 12.

TEXT — 14:13-24

13. Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful;
And the end of mirth is heaviness.
14. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways;
And a good man shall be satisfied from himself.
15. The simple believeth every word;
But the prudent man looketh well to his going.
16. A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil;
But the fool beareth himself insolently, and is confident.
17. He that is soon angry will deal foolishly;
And a man of wicked devices is hated.
18. The simple inherit folly;
But the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
19. The evil bow down before the good;
And the wicked, at the gates of the righteous.
20. The poor is hated even of his own neighbor;
But the rich hath many friends.
21. He that despiseth his neighbor sinneth;
But he that hath pity on the poor, happy is he.
22. Do they not err that devise evil?
But mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.
23. In all labor there is profit;
But the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.
24. The crown of the wise is their riches;
But the folly of fools is only folly.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 14:13-24

1. Are there people who try to act happy when they really aren't, or is life an admixture of happiness and sorrow (v. 13)?
2. In the Bible whose "mirth" ended in "heaviness" (v. 13)?
3. A backslider in heart is filled with his own ways instead of whose ways (v. 14)?
4. At what stage of life is one of the most apt to believe

- every word (v. 15)?
5. Cite other passages connecting fear with departing from sin (v. 16).
 6. What does "insolent" mean (v. 16)?
 7. Who hates a man of wicked devices (v. 17)?
 8. Does life become better for the simple (v. 18)?
 9. What are some Bible instances of v. 19?
 10. Why do people not want to be companions of the extremely poor (v. 20)?
 11. Do you see in v. 21 a man despising his neighbor because he is poor, or is the first clause to be so limited?
 12. What are illustrations of devising evil (v. 22)?
 13. What are illustrations of devising good (v. 22)?
 14. What does "penury" mean (v. 23)?
 15. What is meant by "crown" in v. 24?

PARAPHRASE OF 14:13-24

13. Laughter cannot mask a heavy heart. When the laughter ends, the grief remains.
14. The backslider gets bored with himself; the godly man's life is exciting.
15. Only a simpleton believes what he is told! A prudent man checks to see where he is going.
16. A wise man is cautious and avoids danger; a fool plunges ahead with great confidence.
17. A short-tempered man is a fool. He hates the man who is patient.
18. A simpleton is crowned with folly; the wise man is crowned with knowledge.
19. Evil men bow before the godly.
20. Even his own neighbors despise the poor man, while the rich have many "friends."
21. To despise the poor is to sin. Blessed are those who pity them.
22. Those who plot evil shall wander away and be lost, but those who plan good shall be granted mercy and quietness.
23. Work brings profit; talk brings poverty!
24. Wise men are praised for their wisdom; fools are despised for their folly.

COMMENTS ON 14:13-24

V. 13. Fun and sorrow are found in both statements. Many who laugh may have inward sorrows they are either trying to suppress or cover up (first statement). Some who laugh easily cry just as easily. An old saying: "Laugh before breakfast, and you will cry before night" (probably superstition). Mirth sometimes precedes heaviness, like Belshazzar's feast (Dan. 5:1-6) and loose living (Prov. 5:4).

V. 14. A backslidden life is no longer filled with God's ways but with one's own. A backslider is one who has returned to selfish living. Clarke: "Who is the backslider? 1. The man who once walked in the ways of religion but has withdrawn from them. 2. The man who once fought manfully against the world, the devil, and the flesh but has retreated from the battle or joined the enemy. 3. The man who once belonged to the congregation of the saints but is now removed from them and is set down in the synagogue of Satan." One backslides "in heart" before he does in his "ways": people cease enjoying the assembly before they actually quit attending; they lose their touch with God in prayer before they drop the practice of prayer; etc. A "good man" (contrasted with the backslider) will be satisfied from himself because he is actually filled with God's good and holy ways which bring blessings and satisfaction.

V. 15. Such are like children (Eph. 4:14). Older people often amuse themselves by taking advantage of an innocent child's gullibility by telling him all kinds of yarns and tales. And some people grow up and never doubt anything they hear. In contrast "the prudent man considers whither the advice given will lead him; he always acts with deliveration" ("Pulpit Commentary").

V. 16. A wise man does not take dangerous chances, but a foolish man will (Prov. 22:3). Joseph was a "wise man" who feared God and "departed" from the evil in which Potiphar's wife would have ensnared him (Gen. 39:9-12).

V. 17. The Bible is against quick-temperedness: Tit. 1:7; Jas. 1:19; Prov. 15:18; 16:32. An angry man will deal foolishly because anger momentarily blurs one's judgment (a good reason for not losing one's temper). Jokingly, keep your temper--nobody wants it. A man of wicked devices is hated of God (Prov. 12:2), but two human groups who hate or abhor him are those who are hurt by his devices (like people who get robbed or cheated by

some slick maneuver) and those who do not approve of them (Rev. 2:2).

V. 18. Those at the low end of wisdom (the simple) participate or know only folly (foolishness) (Prov. 18:2; Eccl. 7:5,6); those at the top end (the prudent) are blessed with knowledge (Prov. 9:9). A Stoic saying: "The wise is the only king."

V. 19. "Pulpit Commentary": "The final victory of good over evil is here set forth. However triumphant for a time and apparently prosperous the wicked may be, their success is not lasting; they shall in the end succumb to the righteous even as the Canaanite kings crouched before Joshua's captains (Josh. 10:24) and, hurled from their high estate, they shall stand humbly at the good man's door begging for bread to support their life (I Sam. 2:36). The contrast here indicated is seen in our Lord's report of the rich man and Lazarus when the beggar is comforted and the rich man is tormented, and when the latter urgently sues for the help of the once despised outcast to mitigate the agony which he is suffering" (Luke 16:24). When troubles hit the wicked and ungodly (those who never go to church;, they often turn to the righteous for sympathetic help and comfort (a preacher, the church, or some good Christian). Ultimately the wicked will bend (Dan. 3:24-26, 28-30; 5:13,16; Rev. 3:9).

V. 20. There is a certain shame and disgrace to extreme poverty that causes even neighbors not to be associated with such in people's minds. This is why people are often ashamed of their poor relatives (Prov. 10:7), their clothes, their car, their home, their ways, etc. But people are usually glad to claim relationship and friendship with the financially successful (a saying: "Success makes false friends and true enemies"). The rich have many friends, especially if they are generous with their gifts or have powers and offices to bestow.

V. 21. But we are not to despise our neighbor (even if he is poor, as in v. 20). Some have no sense of respect or honor, seemingly despising, belittling, and running down everyone continually. Let us not thus violate the "second commandment" (Mark 12:31), but let us have pity upon the poor (Gal. 2:10; Matt. 25:35,36), for those who do will be blessed of God (Psa. 41:1; Acts 20:35; Prov. 19:17; Luke 14:13,14).

V. 22. Such a question is an emphatic way to state truth. The man who invented the atomic bomb went out of his mind after it was used on the Japanese, and the widow of the man who

invented television is extremely remorseful because of the evil it has become associated with and promotes. This verse speaks of two devisings (evil and good). Some are devising evil (the wicked), and some are devising good (the godly). What are you devising? Mercy and truth belong together (Prov. 3:3; Psa. 61:7; John 1:17; I Tim. 1:2).

V. 23. There is often a difference between being a talker and a worker. It is not those who talk about what they are going to do but those who go out and get it done that counts. Sometimes children come to look down upon their lazy, wind-bag, good-for-nothing dads who are always talking about the trip the family is going to take, the house they are going to build, etc. but who never get any of it done. This verse has two contrasts: "talk" vs. "labor" and "penury" vs. "profit". "Penury" means to want or to suffer need.

V. 24. Notice "folly" all the way in this triple contrast: "The crown" vs. "the folly"; "of the wise" vs. "of fools"; and "is their riches" vs. "is only folly". Pulpit Commentary: "Decorate folly as you may, deck it out in gaud and ornament, it is still nothing but folly and is discerned as such, and that all the more for being made conspicuous."

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 14:13-24

1. Comment upon v. 13.
2. Who is a backslider (v. 14)?
3. Why is a good man satisfied from himself (v. 14)?
4. What is v. 15's contrast between the simple and the prudent?
5. What is v. 16's contrast between the wise and the foolish?
6. What does the Bible say about being quick-tempered (v. 17)?
7. What is v. 18's contrast between the simple and the prudent?
8. Cite examples of the truth set forth in v. 19.
9. Why do people disdain the poor (v. 20)?
10. Why do many want to claim the rich for friends (v. 20)?
11. What commandment is violated by despising your neighbor (v. 21)?
12. Where else are we taught to have pity (help) the poor (v. 21)?
13. Have people ever lived to regret evil they one time devised (v. 22)?

14. What two contrasts are found in v. 23?
15. What does "penury" mean (v. 23)?
16. Cite the triple contrast in v. 24.

TEXT — 14:25-35

25. A true witness delivereth souls;
But he that uttereth lies causeth deceit.
26. In the fear of Jehovah is strong confidence;
And his children shall have a place of refuge.
27. The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life,
That one may depart from the snares of death.
28. In the multitude of people is the king's glory;
But in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.
29. He that is slow to anger is of great understanding;
But he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.
30. A tranquil heart is the life of the flesh;
But envy is the rottenness of the bones.
31. He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker;
But he that hath mercy on the needy honoreth him.
32. The wicked is thrust down in his evil-doing;
But the righteous hath a refuge in his death.
33. Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding;
But that which is in the inward part of fools is made known.
34. Righteousness exalteth a nation;
But sin is a reproach to any people.
35. The king's favor is toward a servant that dealeth wisely;
But his wrath will be against him that causeth shame.

STUDY QUESTIONS OVER 14:25-35

1. A true witness "delivereth souls" from what (v. 25)?
2. How is "fear" used in v. 26?
3. What is meant by "fountain of life" in v. 27?
4. Give a synonym for "want" in v. 28.
5. Give illustrations of "hasty of spirit" exalting folly (v. 29).
6. What is a "tranquil" heart (v. 30)?
7. What passage in Matt. does v. 31 remind one of?
8. What is the righteous person's "refuge" when death comes (v. 32)?

9. What is the meaning of "resteth" in v. 33?
10. Trace the truthfulness of v. 34 in Israel's up-and-down history.
11. Cite the double contrast in v. 35.

PARAPHRASE OF 14:25-35

25. A witness who tells the truth saves good men from being sentenced to death, but a false witness is a traitor.
26. Reverence for God gives a man deep strength; his children have a place of refuge and security.
27. Reverence for the Lord is a fountain of life; its waters keep a man from death.
28. A growing population is a king's glory; a dwindling nation is his doom.
29. A wise man controls his temper. He knows that anger causes mistakes.
30. A relaxed attitude lengthens a man's life; jealousy rots it away.
31. Anyone who oppresses the poor is insulting God who made them. To help the poor is to honor God.
32. The godly have a refuge when they die, but the wicked are crushed by their sins.
33. Wisdom is enshrined in the hearts of men of common sense, but it must shout loudly before fools will hear it.
34. Godliness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.
35. A king rejoices in servants who know what they are doing; he is angry with those who cause trouble.

COMMENTS ON 14:25-35

V. 25. V. 5 of this chapter speaks of the faithful witness and of the lying witness mentioned in this verse. A true witness "delivereth" souls or persons from their false accusers in court; a false witness, on the other hand, will tell lies of deceit in order to bring about one's condemnation. This verse has a ready application today to the true gospel preacher who delivers souls from the clutch of sin and the doom it would bring upon him and to the false teacher who utters falsehood deceitfully (Eph. 4:14). The tongue of man is either a mighty instrument for good or a mighty monster for bad (Prov. 18:21).

V. 26. This and the following verse both refer to the "fear

of Jehovah". The "fear of Jehovah" here is that reverence for Him that causes one to commit one's whole self to Him, and when this is done, both he and his children are blessed: he has strong confidence or assurance that God will take care of Him (Heb. 13:5,6; Psa. 23:1-6), and his children (brought up to live the same way) will be likewise blessed.

V. 27. This verse and Prov. 13:14 strongly resemble. Also compare it with v. 16. One who fears Jehovah departs from evil that he may escape the "snares of death" (this verse), which characterizes him as "wise" (v. 16). Instead of death he is drinking of the fountain of life. Because Adam and Eve sinned, they were banned from the tree of "life", and they brought "death" upon themselves (Gen. 2:17; 3:22-24).

V. 28. To be too small in number was to invite invasion, and the rule was that the lesser-in-number lost to the greater-in-number. This is why the men of Gideon's army were so fearful (Judg. 6:33; 7:3). In somewhat a different thought Pulpit Commentary says, "This maxim is not in accordance with the views of Oriental conquerors and despots, who in their selfish lust of aggrandizement cared not what suffering they inflicted or what blood they shed...The reign of Solomon, the peaceful, gave an intimation that was and conquest were not a monarch's highest glory; that a happy and numerous people, dwelling securely and increasing in numbers, was a better honor for a king and more to be desired" (I Kings 4:24,25,20).

V. 29. V. 19¹³ of this chapter deals with the man who is "soon angry" while this verse deals with one who is "slow to anger". The quick-tempered man will "deal foolishly" (v. 17), while the calm-headed man is of "great understanding" (this verse). The man of understanding does not burst into a rage, for to do so is to exalt "folly", for an angry man will say and do things before he thinks, which are both unwise and often disastrous. Compare Prov. 16:32 and Jas. 1:19 with this teaching.

V. 30. There is nothing better for the health of one's body than a tranquil, calm, and peaceful heart. Oh, the health disturbances that are brought on through a distraught mind and heart! All the doctor's prescriptions and all the doctor's operations cannot put one's health together again. God wants us to live right that we might be at peace with Him (Num. 6:24-26). He wants us to live at peace with our fellowmen (Heb. 12:14). When our consciences are void of offence toward both God and

men :(Acts 24:16), what a blessing of peace follows (Col. 3:15; Phil. 4:7; Rom. 8:6) Psalms 37:37 I Pet. 3:11), one of which is "the life of the flesh" (this verse). Prov. 12:4 also speaks of "the rottenness of the bones". When one's very framework is thus deteriorated, one's health is in an extremely bad way.

V. 31. One's action toward the poor and needy is here judged in relation to God (Matt. 25:44,45), who is the Maker of the poor as well as any other (Prov. 22:2). Prov. 17:5 speaks of mocking the poor, which also results in reproaching their Maker. V. 21 of this chapter speaks of having pity on the poor which he does by having mercy upon him (this verse). People of Job's day understood this teaching (Job 31:13-15). In life there are some who help make people poor (like the thieves in the Good Samaritan parable, Luke 10:30) and others who help the needy (like the Good Samaritan himself, Luke 10:33,34); and then there are also many (like the priest and levite of that parable) who neither made the man poor nor help him get better (Luke 10:31,32). In which class are you?

V. 32. The wicked are cut off because of their sins (Psa. 37:1,2), sometimes right while they are committing it (Acts 5:1-10; Lev. 10:1,2; Num. 11:33). The godly have always had the refuge of hope and God's help in death (Psa. 23:4; Phil. 1:21,23; II Cor. 5:8). Even wicked men, like Balaam, have wished to die the death of the righteous (Num. 23:10). "Thus the Christian martyrs went joyfully to the stake, and gentle women and little children smiled on the sword which sent them home. It is natural to see in this clause a belief in a future life, and a state of rewards and punishments" ("Pulpit Commentary"). This verse causes us to ask, "Which is really more important--to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season and be rejected and punished of God forever or to live the way that is always right and that will end right?"

V. 33. A triple contrast: "Wisdom" vs. "that which is in the inward part of fools"; "him that hath understanding" vs. "fools"; and "resteth" vs. "is made known". From the contrast we understand the word "rest" as meaning it quietly resides. Therefore, a wise, informed, and knowledgeable person is not always telling all he may know (he couldn't, and he has no disposition to flaunt his knowledge;. But with fools it is different: they are always talking, and they will tell you everything (Prov. 29:11; 12:16). For the last clause a few Hebrew copies give, "In the midst of fools it maketh itself known."

V. 34. An oft-quoted verse because its message is pertinent. God sees that righteousness does build up, bless, and make a great nation, and history surely shows that sin deteriorates a nation (many nations have fallen from the inside through moral degradation). Who could better understand this verse than the Israelites themselves who could certainly see that when they had good kings and were following God's way, the nation was "up", and that when they had bad kings and were following wickedness, the nation was "down"? This is observable throughout Kings and Chronicles.

V. 35. Every leader that Joseph was under (Potiphar, the jailer, and Pharaoh) could see that he was wise, and they respected that wisdom and showed favor toward him (Gen. 39:3-6, 21-23; 41:39-43). Daniel, too, though a part of a captured people, was in every king's favor and service that he was under (Dan. 1:19,20; 2:46-48; 5:29; 6:1-3). For the promotion of the wise see Matt. 24:45,47. Even heathen governments have punished those who did things contrary to its laws and things against its best interest. In this age of softening-punishments (in the government, at work, at school, in the home, etc.) there is a need to return to stricter trials and just punishments.

TEST QUESTIONS OVER 14:25-35

1. How might v. 25 apply to preachers?
2. What does the fear of Jehovah cause one to do (v. 26)?
3. What else does one do who fears Jehovah (v. 27)?
4. Why was Gideon's army so fearful in Judg. 6,7 (v. 28)?
5. How does one hasty of spirit exalt folly (v. 29)?
6. Relate both a peaceful heart and an envious heart to one's health (v. 30).
7. What are three classes of people in relation to the poor (v. 31)?
8. Name some wicked people who were cut down right while doing their sin (v. 32).
9. State the contrast in v. 33 concerning the understand and the fools.
10. How was the nation of Israel in a good position to understand v. 34?
11. What Bible heroes served their governmental superiors well (v. 35)?

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

NOTICEABLE GROUPINGS IN CHAPTER 14

"Fools"--

- "The foolish plucketh it down with her own hands" (v. 1).
- "In the mouth of the foolish is a rod for his pride" (v. 3).
- "Go into the presence of a foolish man, And thou shalt not perceive in him the lips of knowledge" (v. 7).
- "The folly of fools is deceit" (v. 8);
- "A trespass-offering mocketh fools" (v. 9).
- "The fool beareth himself insolently, and is confident" (v. 16).
- "He that is soon angry will deal foolishly" (v. 17).
- "The simple inherit folly" (v. 18).
- "The folly of fools is only folly" (v. 24).
- "He that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly" (v. 29).
- "That which is in the inward part of fools is made known" (v. 33).

"The simple"--

- "The simple believe every word" (v. 15).
- "The simple inherit folly" (v. 18).

"The wise"--

- "Every wise woman buildeth her house" (v. 1).
- "The lips of the wise shall preserve them" (v. 3).
- "Knowledge is easy unto him that hath understanding." (v. 6).
- "The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way" (v. 8).
- "The prudent man looketh well to his going" (v. 15).
- "A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil" (v. 16).
- "The prudent are crowned with knowledge" (v. 18).
- "The crown of the wise is their riches" (v. 24).
- "He that is slow to anger is of great understanding" (v. 29).
- "Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding" (v. 33).
- "The king's favor is toward a servant that dealeth wisely" (v. 35).

"Fear"--

- "He that walketh in his uprightness feareth Jehovah" (v. 2).
- "A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil" (v. 16).
- "In the fear of Jehovah is strong confidence" (v. 26).

CHAPTER 14

"The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life" (v. 27).

"Speech"--

"In the mouth of the foolish is a rod for his pride; But the lips of the wise shall preserve them" (v. 3).

"A faithful witness will not lie; But a false witness uttereth lies" (v. 5).

"A foolish man, And thou shalt not perceive in him the lips of knowledge" (v. 7).

"The talk of the lips tendeth only to penury" (v. 23).

"A true witness delivereth souls; But he that uttereth lies causeth deceit" (v. 25).

"The righteous"--

"He that walketh in his uprightness feareth Jehovah" (v. 2).

"Among the upright there is good will" (v. 9).

"The tent of the upright shall flourish" (v. 11).

"A goodman shall be satisfied from himself" (v. 14).

"Mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good" (v. 22).

"The righteous hath a refuge in his death" (v. 32).

"The wicked"--

"The house of the wicked shall be overthrown" (v. 11).

"A man of wicked devices is hated" (v. 17).

"The evil bow down before the good; And the wicked, at the gates of the righteous" (v. 19).

"Do they not err that devise evil?" (v. 22).

"The wicked is thrust down in his evil-doing" (v. 32).

"Knowledge"--

"Knowledge is easy unto him that hath understanding" (v. 6).

"Thou shalt not perceive in him the lips of knowledge" (v. 7).

"The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way" (v. 8).

"The prudent are crowned with knowledge" (v. 18).

"Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding" (v. 33).

PONDERING THE PROVERBS

GOD CREATED US ALL

“The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all” (22:2). The rich may feel superior to the poor, but they need to remember that God is the poor man’s God just as much as He is their God. They should not overlook the fact that the poor man is rich in the fact that he too is a recipient of God’s love and concern. On the other hand, the poor many times hate the rich, but they need to remember that God is just as much concerned about the soul of the rich as He is their souls. All have been created in the image of God, and we have gone a long way in living right in the earth when we come to regard each person as one who bears the image of God. Because of this fact, we are to have a regard and a love for each individual.

“The poor and the deceitful man meet together: the Lord lighteneth both their eyes” (29:13). God does not rejoice in their deceitfulness, but He bears with them in His great longsuffering and loving kindness, hoping that the time will come when they will be what they should be. That we too might not abandon people without any future hope whom God continues to sustain!

GOD CREATED AND SUSTAINS THE UNIVERSE

The thought that all things came into existence through millions of years of struggle via the evolutionary route is all too common today. That all things merely govern themselves in a natural way without any personal God behind it all seems even more common. But, both concepts are wrong. Proverbs is strong on the fact of God’s creation, and it also shows that He governs His universe today: “The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew” (3:19:20).