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PROVERBS 11: 1 A false balance is an abomination to the LORD, but accurate weights are his delight.

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A parallel of the advantages of the righteous and wise, opposed to the miseries of the wicked and the foolish. True and false riches.

Verse 1

A false balance is abomination - This refers to the balance itself deceitfully constructed, so that it is sooner turned at one end than at the other. This is occasioned by one end of the beam being longer than the other.

But a just weight - אבן שלמה eben shelemah, the perfect stone probably because weights were first made of stone; see the law, Deu 25:13-16 (note).

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PROVERBS 11: 2 When pride comes, then comes shame, but with humility comes wisdom.

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Verse 2

When pride cometh - The proud man thinks much more of himself than any other can do; and, expecting to be treated according to his own supposed worth, which treatment he seldom meets with, he is repeatedly mortified, ashamed, confounded, and rendered indignant.

With the lowly - צנועים tsenuim, ταπεινων, the humble, the modest, as opposed to the proud, referred to in the first clause. The humble man looks for nothing but justice; has the meanest opinion of himself; expects nothing in the way of commendation or praise; and can never be disappointed but in receiving praise, which he neither expects nor desires.

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PROVERBS 11: 3 The integrity of the upright shall guide them, but the perverseness of the treacherous shall destroy them.

PROVERBS 11: 4 Riches don't profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.

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Verse 4

Riches profit not in the day of wrath - Among men they can do all things; but they cannot purchase the remission of sins, nor turn aside the wrath of God when that is poured out upon the opulent transgressor.

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PROVERBS 11: 5 The righteousness of the blameless will direct his way, but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.

PROVERBS 11: 6 The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them, but the unfaithful will be trapped by evil desires.

PROVERBS 11: 7 When a wicked man dies, hope perishes, and expectation of power comes to nothing.

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Verse 7

When a wicked man dieth - Hope is a great blessing to man in his present state of trial and suffering; because it leads him to expect a favorable termination of his ills. But hope was not made for the wicked; and yet they are the very persons that most abound in it! They hope to be saved, and get at last to the kingdom of God; though they have their face towards perdition, and refuse to turn. But their hope goes no farther than the grave. There the wicked man's expectation is cut off, and his hope perishes. But to the saint, the penitent, and the cross-bearers in general, what a treasure is hope! What a balm through life!

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PROVERBS 11: 8 A righteous person is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked takes his place.

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Verse 8

The wicked cometh in his stead - Often God makes this distinction; in public calamities and in sudden accidents he rescues the righteous, and leaves the wicked, who has filled up the measure of his iniquities, to be seized by the hand of death. Justice, then, does its own work; for mercy has been rejected.

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PROVERBS 11: 9 With his mouth the godless man destroys his neighbour, but the righteous will be delivered through knowledge.

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Verse 9

A hypocrite with his mouth - חָנֵף chaneph might be better translated infidel than hypocrite. The latter is one that pretends to religion; that uses it for secular purposes. The former is one who disbelieves Divine revelation, and accordingly is polluted, and lives in pollution. This is properly the force of the original word. Such persons deal in calumny and lies, and often thus destroy the character of their neighbor. Besides, they are very zealous in propagating their own infidel notions; and thus, by this means, destroy their neighbor; but the experimental knowledge which the just have of God and his salvation prevents them from being ensnared.

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PROVERBS 11: 10 When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices. When the wicked perish, there is shouting.

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Verse 10

When it goeth well - An upright, pious, sensible man is a great blessing to the neighborhood where he resides, by his example, his advice, and his prayers. The considerate prize him on these accounts,

and rejoice in his prosperity. But when the wicked perish, who has been a general curse by the contagion of his example and conversation, there is not only no regret expressed for his decease, but a general joy because God has removed him.

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PROVERBS 11: 11 By the blessing of the upright, the city is exalted, but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

PROVERBS 11: 12 One who despises his neighbour is void of wisdom, but a man of understanding holds his peace.

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Verse 12

He that is void of wisdom - A foolish man is generally abundant in his censures; he dwells on the defects of his neighbor, and is sure to bring them into the most prominent view. But a man of understanding - a prudent, sensible man, hides those defects wherever he can, and puts the most charitable construction on those which he cannot conceal.

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PROVERBS 11: 13 One who brings gossip betrays a confidence, but one who is of a trustworthy spirit is one who keeps a secret.

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Verse 13

A talebearer - הולך רכיל holech rachil, the walking busybody, the trader in scandal.

Revealeth secrets - Whatever was confided to him he is sure to publish abroad. The word means a hawker, or travelling chapman. Such are always great newsmongers; and will tell even their own secrets, rather than have nothing to say.

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PROVERBS 11: 14 Where there is no wise guidance, the nation falls, but in the multitude of counsellors there is victory.

PROVERBS 11: 15 He who is collateral for a stranger will suffer for it, but he who refuses pledges of collateral is secure.

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Verse 15

He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it - He shall find evil upon evil in it. See on Pro 6:1 (note).

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PROVERBS 11: 16 A gracious woman obtains honour, but violent men obtain riches.

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Verse 16

A gracious woman retaineth honor - Instead of this clause, the Septuagint have, Γυνη ευχαριστος εγειρει ανδρι δοξαν, "A gracious woman raiseth up honor to the man;" Θρονος δε ατιμιας γυνη μισουσα δικαια, "But she that hateth righteous things is a throne of dishonor." A good wife is an honor to her husband; and a bad wife is her husband's reproach: if this be so, how careful should a man be whom he marries!

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PROVERBS 11: 17 The merciful man does good to his own soul, but he who is cruel troubles his own flesh.

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Verse 17

The merciful man doeth good to his own soul - Every gracious disposition is increased while a man is exercised in showing mercy. No man can show an act of disinterested mercy without benefiting his own soul, by improving his moral feeling.

But he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh - We seldom see a peevish, fretful, vindictive man either in good health, or good plight of body. I have often heard it observed of such, "He frets his flesh off his bones."

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PROVERBS 11: 18 Wicked people earn deceitful wages, but one who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.

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Verse 18

Worketh a deceitful work - An unstable work; nothing is durable that he does, except his crimes.

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PROVERBS 11: 19 He who is truly righteous gets life. He who pursues evil gets death.

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Verse 19

Righteousness tendeth to life - True godliness promotes health, and is the best means of lengthening out life; but wicked men live not out half their days.

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PROVERBS 11: 20 Those who are perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD, but those whose ways are blameless are his delight.

PROVERBS 11: 21 Most certainly, the evil man will not be unpunished, but the seed of the righteous will be delivered.

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Verse 21

Though hand join in hand - Let them confederate as they please, to support each other, justice will take care that they escape not punishment. The Hindoos sometimes ratify an engagement by one person laying his right hand on the hand of another - Ward.

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PROVERBS 11: 22 Like a gold ring in a pig's snout, is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.

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Verse 22

A jewel of gold in a swine's snout - That is, beauty in a woman destitute of good breeding and modest carriage, is as becoming as a gold ring on the snout of a swine. Coverdale translates thus: "A fayre woman without discrete maners, is like a ringe of golde in a swyne's snoute." In Asiatic countries the nose jewel is very common: to this the text alludes.

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PROVERBS 11: 23 The desire of the righteous is only good. The expectation of the wicked is wrath.

PROVERBS 11: 24 There is one who scatters, and increases yet more. There is one who withholds more than is appropriate, but gains poverty.

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Verse 24

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth - The bountiful man, who gives to the poor, never turning away his face from any one in distress, the Lord blesses his property and the bread is multiplied in his hand. To the same purpose the following verse.

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PROVERBS 11: 25 The liberal soul shall be made fat. He who waters shall be watered also himself.

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Verse 25

The liberal soul shall be made fat - He who gives to the distressed, in the true spirit of charity, shall get a hundred fold from God's mercy. How wonderful is the Lord! He gives the property, gives the heart to use it aright, and recompenses the man for the deed though all the fruit was found from himself!

He that watereth - A man who distributes in the right spirit gets more good himself than the poor man does who receives the bounty. Thus it is more blessed to give than to receive.

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PROVERBS 11: 26 People curse someone who withholds grain, but blessing will be on the head of him who sells it.

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Verse 26

He that withholdeth corn - Who refuses to sell because he hopes for a dearth, and then he can make his own price.

The people shall curse him - Yes, and God shall curse him also; and if he do not return and repent, he will get God's curse, and the curse of the poor, which will be a canker in his money during time, and in his soul throughout eternity.

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PROVERBS 11: 27 He who diligently seeks good seeks favour, but he who searches after evil, it shall come to him.

PROVERBS 11: 28 He who trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous shall flourish as the green leaf.

PROVERBS 11: 29 He who troubles his own house shall inherit the wind. The foolish shall be servant to the wise of heart.

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Verse 29

Shalt inherit the wind - He who dissipates his property by riotous living, shall be as unsatisfied as he who attempts to feed upon air.

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PROVERBS 11: 30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life. He who is wise wins souls.

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Verse 30

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life - עץ חיים ets chaiyim, "the tree of lives." It is like that tree which grew in the paradise of God; increasing the bodily and mental vigor of those who ate of it.

He that winneth souls is wise - Wisdom seeks to reclaim the wanderers; and he who is influenced by wisdom will do the same.

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PROVERBS 11: 31 Behold, the righteous shall be repaid in the earth; how much more the wicked and the sinner!

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Verse 31

Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, etc. - The Septuagint, Syrian, and Arabic read this verse as follows: "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" And this St, Peter quotes literatim, 1Pet 4:18 (note), where see the note.