

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS

This book is called, in some printed Hebrew copies, “Sepher Mishle”, the Book of Proverbs; the title of it in the Vulgate Latin version is,

“the Book of Proverbs, which the Hebrews call “Misle”:”

in the Septuagint version it has the name of the writer, the Proverbs of Solomon; and so in the Syriac version, with the addition of his titles,

“the son of David, king of Israel.”

This and Ecclesiastes are both of them by the Jews^{f1} called Books of Wisdom: and it is common with the ancient Christian writers^{f2} to call the book of Proverbs by the names of “Wisdom” and “Panaretos”; names they give also to the apocryphal books of Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon; and therefore this is to be carefully distinguished from them. The author of this book was King Solomon, as the “first” verse, which contains the inscription of it, shows; for he was not a collector of these proverbs, as Grotius is of opinion, but the author of them, at least of the far greater part; and not only the author, but the writer of them: the Jews^{f3} say that Hezekiah and this men wrote them; it is true indeed the men of Hezekiah copied some, (~~25:1~~ Proverbs 25:1); but even those were written by Solomon. R. Gedaliah^{f4} would have it that Isaiah the prophet wrote this book; but without any foundation. At what time it was written is not certain; the Jewish writers generally say^{f5} it was written by Solomon, as were the books of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs, in his old age, when near the time of his death; though some think it was written before his fall: and it may be it was not written all at once, but at certain times, when these proverbs occurred unto him and were spoken by him, and as occasion served: however, it is not to be doubted but that they were written under the inspiration of God. The Jews once thought to have made this book of Proverbs an apocryphal one, because of some seeming contradictions in it; but finding that these were capable of a reconciliation, changed their minds, as became them^{f6}. Among Christians, Theodore of Mopsuest, in the sixth century, denied the divine authority of this book, and attributed it merely to human wisdom; which opinion of his was condemned in the second council at Constantinople: and in later times it has been treated with contempt by the Socinians, and particularly by Father Simon and Leviticus Clerc; but

the authority of it is confirmed by the writers of the New Testament, who have cited passages out of it; (see ~~<6121>~~Romans 12:20 ~~<8115>~~Hebrews 12:5,6 ~~<6122>~~2 Peter 2:22) from (~~<3150>~~Proverbs 25:21,22 3:11,12 26:11). The book consists of “five” parts; “first”, a preface or introduction, which takes up the first “nine” chapters; the “second”, the proverbs of Solomon, put together by himself, beginning at the tenth chapter to the twenty-fifth; the “third”, the proverbs of Solomon, copied by the men of Hezekiah, beginning at the twenty-fifth chapter to the thirtieth; the “fourth”, the words of Agur, the thirtieth chapter, the “fifth”, the instruction of Solomon’s mother, Bathsheba, the thirty-first chapter.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 1

After the inscription, which gives the title of the book, and describes the author by his name, descent, and dignity, (^{<2100>}Proverbs 1:1), follows the scope and design of it, which is to teach men wisdom and knowledge; even such as are simple and foolish, and particularly young men; nay, hereby wise men may grow wiser, and attain to an higher degree of learning, (^{<2100>}Proverbs 1:2-6); and the “first” doctrine taught in it is the fear of the Lord, or devotion to God; which is the beginning of knowledge, though despised by fools, (^{<2100>}Proverbs 1:7). The next is obedience to parents; whose instructions, attended to, are more ornamental than chains of gold, (^{<2100>}Proverbs 1:8,9). And then follows a dissuasive from bad company; in which the arguments made use of by wicked men to draw in others with them, and the danger of compliance, are most strongly and beautifully represented, (^{<2100>}Proverbs 1:10-19). When Wisdom, who is the instructor and teacher throughout the whole, is introduced as calling upon the simple and the scorners to leave their sins and turn to her, with a promise of the Spirit to them, (^{<2100>}Proverbs 1:20-23); but they slighting and rejecting her call, are threatened with just and irrevocable ruin and destruction, (^{<2100>}Proverbs 1:24-32). And the chapter is closed with a promise of safety and rest to those that hearken to her, (^{<2100>}Proverbs 1:33).

Ver. 1. *The proverbs of Solomon*, etc.] Who is said to make three thousand proverbs, (^{<2100>}1 Kings 4:32); but whether any of them are contained in this book cannot be said: however, it is certain that they are not all in it, since, if you except the first “nine” chapters, which are the introduction to the Proverbs, there are but six hundred and fifty-nine verses in it; and if they are taken in, they make but nine hundred and fifteen, which are not a third part of the proverbs said to be made by him: however, here are as many and such as God thought fit should be preserved for instruction in all future ages. It was usual with the ancients in all countries, when any truth was found, and established by experience, to wrap it up in a few apt words, with or without a figure; that it might be the better understood and more easily retained, and which were always venerable and

greatly attended to: and of this kind are these proverbs; only with this difference, that these are of divine inspiration, and the others not. The word used for them comes from one which signifies “similitude” and “dominion”^{f7}; because many of them are similes or comparisons, and are delivered out in figurative expressions, in metaphors and allegories, and the like; and have all of them a commanding power, authority, and influence upon the mind, obliging to an attention to them. The name of Solomon is put to them, the more to recommend them; who had a wise and understanding heart, as large as the sand of the sea, and was wiser than all men, (^{<1049>}1 Kings 4:29-31); and was an eminent type of Christ, who spake in proverbs also, (^{<8165>}John 16:25). He is further described by his pedigree and office,

the son of David, king of Israel; a wise son of a wise father, and king over a wise and understanding people. These titles are added for the further commendation of the book; and it may be observed that they are such as belong to the Messiah, Solomon’s antitype, one that is greater than he, (^{<8100>}Matthew 1:1 ^{<8104>}John 1:49).

Ver. 2. *To know wisdom and instruction*, etc.] That is, these proverbs were made, and written, and published, to make known or to teach men wisdom and knowledge; not only in things moral, and therefore these proverbs are by some called Solomon’s “ethics”; and indeed they do contain the best system of morality in the whole world; nothing like it is to be extracted out of all the writings of the Heathen poets and philosophers: nor only in things civil; for which reason they may be called his “politics”, seeing they are instructive to kings and civil magistrates, and to subjects; and also his “economics”, seeing they furnish out rules for husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, worthy of their attention and observance: but also they are a means of and are designed to teach spiritual and evangelical wisdom and knowledge; things relating to Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, and the way of life and salvation by him, the knowledge of which is life eternal. These words, with others that follow, seem to be synonymous, and signify much one and the same thing; and are used to show that the most consummate wisdom and comprehensive knowledge may be attained by means of this book; which, like the rest of Scripture, with a divine blessing, is able to make a man “wise unto salvation”; and is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness”, (^{<8185>}2 Timothy 3:15,16); where the apostle seems to allude to this text: since “wisdom” here may stand for “doctrine” in general; and

“instruction” may signify the means of attaining to it; and it may be observed, that the word is used for “discipline” and “correction”, as well as “instruction”. If these words are to be distinguished, the first, “wisdom”, may design a wise scheme and plan of truths, and the theory of them and the latter, “instruction”, the learning it and putting it into practice; and for both theory and practice this book is useful;

to perceive the words of understanding; which flow from a good understanding, and give a right understanding of things; so that a man may be able to distinguish between light and darkness, truth and error, right and wrong; particularly the doctrines of the Gospel may be meant, which are eminently so, and exceed the understanding of a natural man, and which are only understood by a spiritual man; the means of knowing which are the Scriptures, under the guidance and direction of the Spirit of God.

Ver. 3. *To receive the instruction of wisdom*, etc.] Or “prudence”^{f8}; of wise and prudent men; and especially of Christ himself, who bears those names, whose instructions this book is full of; and the design of which is to engage the attention of men to them, and prevail upon them to receive them, and act conformably to them. Which instructions respect the following things; and which are added by way of illustration and amplification, viz.

justice, and judgment, and equity; that which is just in itself, and according to the nature of God and his will; and is judged so by right reason; and is equitable between man and man, and agrees with the law of God. These three, R. Levi Ben Gersom says, signify one and the same thing; true righteousness, doing that which is just to God and man; which the doctrines of grace, or the instructions of wisdom, teach men to do; concerning which many rules may be collected from this book.

Ver. 4. *To give subtlety to the simple*, etc.] Men of mean abilities, weak capacities, shallow understandings, incautious, credulous, and easily imposed upon: these, by attending to what is herein contained, may arrive to a serpentine subtlety; though they are simple and harmless as doves, may become as wise as serpents; may attain to an exquisite knowledge of divine things and know even more than the wise and sage philosophers among the Gentiles, or any of the Rabbins and masters of Israel; or any of the princes of this world, whose wisdom comes to nought; and become very cautious and circumspect how they are drawn aside by the old serpent the devil, or

by such who lie in wait to deceive; and perform their duty both to God and man;

to the young man knowledge and discretion; or “thought”^{f9}; who wants both: this book will teach him the knowledge of things moral, civil, and religious: to think and act aright; how to behave and conduct himself wisely and discreetly before men; and be a means of forming his mind betimes for piety and religion; and of furnishing him with rules for his deportment in future life, in all the periods of it; and in whatsoever state and condition he may come into. A “young man [may] cleanse his way”, (⁽⁻³³⁰⁾Psalm 119:9), reform his manners, behave with purity and uprightness, by taking “heed” to the things herein contained.

Ver. 5. *A wise [man] will hear*, etc.] With great attention, and hearken to the proverbs and wise sayings herein delivered; for here are many things entertaining to men of years and wisdom, as well as instructive to young men and simple ones;

and will increase learning; or “add”^{f10} to his stock of learning; or, as the Targum,

“will add knowledge;”

(see ⁽⁻⁶⁰¹⁵⁾2 Peter 1:5); or, “will be wiser”, as the Vulgate Latin version. This is said to show the excellency of this book, and the extensive usefulness of it; indeed wise men will get knowledge where fools cannot, and increase learning where others can get none: there are few books but a wise man will get something out of; and especially such a book as this, and as the Scriptures are;

and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels; a man of a spiritual understanding arrives to the knowledge of the wise counsels of God; the doctrines of the Gospel, which are the “whole counsel” of God; are recondite wisdom, the hidden wisdom of God, which no wisdom of man is comparable to. It is the wisest scheme that was ever formed, and which the wit of man could never have devised, even salvation by Jesus Christ; and which was laid in God’s “counsels of old”, which are “faithfulness” and “truth”; the knowledge of which is attained unto by one that is spiritually wise. Moreover, a man that thoroughly understands the things contained in this book is fit to be a counsellor of others in things human and divine; in things moral, civil, and spiritual: he is fit to be in the cabinet council of princes, to be a counsellor of kings; yea, to have the

reins of government in his hands. “He shall possess government”; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions: or, “he shall possess the helm”^{f11}; sit as a pilot there, as the word may signify, and steer the ship aright in which he is; whether it be his family, or the church of God, or a city or corporation, or a kingdom: this book, rightly understood by him, will furnish him with rules to do all things well and wisely.

Ver. 6. *To understand a proverb, and the interpretation,* etc.] This may be connected either with the first verse, “the proverbs of Solomon”, etc. are written, as for the above ends and purposes, so for these; or with (^{<3005>}Proverbs 1:5), a wise and understanding man, by hearkening and attending to what is here delivered, will not only attain to wise counsels, but to the understanding of proverbial sayings, and to see into the “elegancy”^{f12}, the eloquence and beauty of them, as the word signifies; and be able to interpret them to others in a clear, plain, way and manner;

the words of the wise, and their dark sayings; the words and doctrines, not of the wise philosophers and sages of the Heathen world, but of men truly wise and good; and especially of the wise inspired writers of the Scriptures, whose words come from one Shepherd, (^{<2121>}Ecclesiastes 12:11); and the enigmas or riddles contained in their writings, which are so to a natural man, obscure phrases and expressions, things hard and difficult to be understood, yet to a spiritual man, that judgeth all things, plain and easy, (^{<4124>}1 Corinthians 2:14,15 ^{<6036>}2 Peter 3:16).

Ver. 7. *The fear of the Lord [is] the beginning of knowledge,* etc.] Here properly the book begins, and this is the first of the proverbs, and an excellent one; it is such an one as is not to be found in all the writings of the Heathens. By “the fear of the Lord” is not meant a servile fear, a fear of punishment, of hell, wrath, and damnation, which is the effect of the first work of the law upon the conscience; but a filial fear, and supposes knowledge of God as a father, of his love and grace in Christ, particularly of his forgiving love, from whence it arises, (^{<3104>}Psalms 130:4 ^{<2035>}Hosea 3:5); it is a holy, humble, fiducial fear of God; a reverential affection for him, and devotion to him; it includes the whole of religious worship, both internal and external; all that is contained in the first table of the law, and the manner of performing it, and principle of acting: this is the first of all sciences to be learned, and it is the principal one; it is the basis and foundation of all the rest, on which they depend; and it is the head, the fountain, the root an source, from whence they spring; and unless a man

knows God, knows God in Christ, and worships him in his fear, in spirit and in truth, according to his revealed will, he knows nothing as he ought to know; and all his knowledge will be of no avail and profit to him; this is the first and chief thing in spiritual and evangelical knowledge, and without which all natural knowledge will signify nothing; (see ~~<K33>~~ Job 28:28 ~~<B110>~~ Psalm 111:10);

[but] fools despise wisdom and instruction; the same with “knowledge” before; they do not desire the knowledge of God, and of his ways and worship, but despise it, make no account of it, but treat it with contempt; especially the knowledge of God in Christ, in which lies the highest wisdom, for this is “life eternal”, (~~<B17>~~ John 17:3); they despise Christ “the Wisdom of God”, and the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are “the hidden wisdom” of God; and all “instruction” into it, and the means of it; they despise the Scriptures, which are able to make a man “wise unto salvation”; and the ministry of the word, and the ministers of it: such sort of “discipline”,^{f13} was this, as the word signifies, they dislike and abhor; and especially “correction” or “chastisement”,^{f14} which is also the sense of it; suffering reproach and affliction for the sake of wisdom, a profession of Christ and his Gospel; and they are fools with a witness that despise all this; such fools are atheists, deists, and all profane and wicked men. The Septuagint render it, “the ungodly”; and such sort of men are all along meant by “fools” in this book.

Ver. 8. *My son, hear the instruction of thy father*, etc.] This is not to be understood of God the Father of mankind, and of that law which he has given them, as Jarchi and Gersom interpret it, but of Solomon and his son in a literal sense; and of anyone that came to him for instruction, any pupil, hearer, or reader of his; and it is a direction to all children to hearken to the instruction of their parents, and obey their commands; so, next to the fear and worship of God, he exhorts to obedience to parents, and proceeds just in the same order and method in which the decalogue or ten commands were written; the first table respects God and his worship, and the second follows, which begins with “honour thy father and thy mother”, etc. (~~<Q12>~~ Exodus 20:12), which, the apostle says, is “the first commandment with promise”, (~~<B11>~~ Ephesians 6:1,2);

and forsake not the law of thy mother; meaning not the congregation of Israel, the old synagogue, or Jewish church, as Jarchi; and so in the Talmud^{f15} it is interpreted of the congregation of Israel, as is “thy father” in

the former clause of the divine Being; nor the operative faculty of the human understanding, as Gersom; but the mother of Solomon's son; and any and every mother of a child, who having an equal or greater tenderness for her offspring, and a true and hearty regard for their welfare, will instruct them in the best manner she can, give the best rules, and prescribe the best laws she can for their good; and which ought to be as carefully attended to and obeyed as those of a father; and she is particularly mentioned, because the law of God equally enjoins reverence and obedience to both parents, which human laws among the Gentiles did not; and because children are too apt to slight the directions and instructions of a mother; whereas they carry equal authority, and have in them the nature of a law, as those of a father.

Ver. 9. *For they [shall be] an ornament of grace unto thy head,* etc.] The instructions and laws of parents being attended unto and obeyed by children, render them more lovely and amiable than any beautiful ornament whatever that can be put upon their heads;

and chains about thy neck; be that unto them as chains of gold are to the neck, beautify and adorn them; so good works, done in obedience to God and parents, are ornaments of great price, and preferable to any outward adorning whatever; (see <sup>^{SABB>}1 Timothy 2:9,10 <sup>^{GIBB>}1 Peter 3:3,4). The allusions are unto, and the metaphors taken from, those things which are most pleasing and acceptable to children, as fine top knots and golden chains.

Ver. 10. *My son, if sinners entice thee,* etc.] Endeavour to seduce thee from thy parents, and draw thee aside from them, from listening to their instructions, advice, and commands; and make use of all plausible arguments to persuade thee to join with them in the sins they are addicted unto, and are continually employed in: for this is not to be understood of such who are sinners by nature, and through infirmity of the flesh, as all men are; but of notorious sinners, who are guilty of the grossest enormities, who live in sin, and give up themselves to work all manner of wickedness; sin is their trade and business, and the constant course of their lives; they are hardened, impudent, and daring, and not content to sin themselves, but do all they can to draw in others; and to preserve youth from falling into such bad company is this exhortation given in this tender, affectionate, and moving manner; next to the fear of God, and regard to

parents, is this caution given to shun the company of wicked men, which young men are liable to be drawn into, and is of fatal consequence;

consent thou not; yield not to their persuasions, listen not to their solicitations, show no liking and approbation of them, assent neither by words nor deeds; do not say “thou wilt”; say “I will not”, and abide by it; be deaf to all their entreaties, and proof against all their persuasions.

Ver. 11. *If they say, come with us*, etc.] Leave your father’s house, and the business of life in which you are; make one of us, and become a member of our society, and go along with us upon the highway;

let us lay wait for blood; lie in ambush under some hedge or another, waiting till a rich traveller comes up and passes that way, and then rise and shed his blood in order to get his money; and the same word signifies both “blood” and “money”, and wait is laid for one for the sake of the other;

let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause; or “let us hide”^{f16}, the Vulgate Latin version adds “snares”; so Vatablus and others, as the fowler does for birds; or “let us hide ourselves”^{f17}; in some private place, waiting “for the innocent”, the harmless traveller, who has done no injury to any man’s person or property; thinks himself safe, and is not aware of any design upon him; going about his lawful business, and having done nothing to provoke such miscreants to attempt his life or take away his property: and which they do “without cause” as to him; “freely”^{f18} as to themselves; and “with impunity”^{f19}, as they promise themselves and one another; all which senses the word used will bear.

Ver. 12. *Let us swallow them up alive as the grave*, etc.] The innocent person, and those that are with him, his servants; our gang is so numerous that we can very easily dispatch him and all his attendants, and bury them out of sight at once, as if they were swallowed up alive in a grave, and so no more to be seen or heard of; and consequently we shall be in the utmost safety and security, there being no traces of what is done, nor any left to make a relation of it, or to give any information of us, or to pursue us;

and whole, as those that go down into the pit; who though whole and in perfect health, shall in a moment be destroyed and cast into the pit, being first plundered of all the riches they have about them; for this swallowing them up alive and whole, which is an allusion to a beast of prey swallowing up another creature all at once, not only intends their cruelty in taking away life, but their rapaciousness in seizing upon their substance.

Ver. 13. *We shall find all precious substance*, etc.] Among one or another we meet with; gold and silver and precious stones, everything that is valuable; not considering that hereby they were in danger of losing the more precious substance, their immortal souls; and the most precious substance of all, the enjoyment of God, and happiness with him to all eternity, which is the “more enduring substance”: the things of this world, properly speaking, are not substance, though wicked men so judge them; they are things that are not; nor are they “precious”, in comparison of spiritual and heavenly things; but they are what carnal men set a high price and value upon, and risk the loss of their name, lives, and souls for;

we shall fill our houses with spoil; Aben Ezra interprets this of garments; but it may not only design the garments taken from the persons robbed and killed; but also their money, commodities, and goods they were travelling with, which in time would be so large as to fill everyone of their houses; covetousness lies at the bottom of all this wickedness; the love of money is the root of all evil.

Ver. 14. *Cast in thy lot among us*, etc.] Or “thou shall cause thy lot to fall among us”^{f20}; though just entered, as soon as any booty is taken thou shalt cast lots with us, and have thy full share with those that have been longer engaged;

let us all have one purse; or “we will all have one purse”^{f21}; will throw all our booty, taken by us into one common stock, and live upon it comfortably and merrily. Jarchi represents it as putting it to the young man’s option, to do which he would, either to cast lots and take his share separately, or let it be put altogether, and so partake jointly with the rest. According to Gersom the sense is, that there should be such an exact division made, that there should not be more in one purse than in another; their shares should be equally divided by lot, and their purses should be alike; one should not have more than another: these are the arguments used by wicked men to allure and ensnare young men to join with them in their sinful ways and practices; from which they are dehorted, as follows.

Ver. 15. *My son, walk not thou in the way with them*, etc.] In the same way as they do, which is the broad way that leads unto destruction; set not one foot in it; make no trial of it, whether it will be pleasant and profitable walking in it; the experiment will be dangerous;

refrain thy foot from their path; their manner and course of life; do not follow it, nor join them in it; when there is an inclination or a temptation to it, withstand it; stop in time, do not proceed, but draw back, and go on in the way thou hast been trained up in, and remember the instructions of thy parents.

Ver. 16. *For their feet run to evil*, etc.] To the evil of sin, to commit robberies and murder, and all manner of iniquity; they are eager upon it, and in haste and swift to do it, (~~2088~~Proverbs 6:18)^{f22}; being carried away with their inordinate affections, which are as feet to the soul; and drawn aside with their lusts, and pushed on by Satan, and, encouraged by one another, and so rush on headlong to the evil of punishment also; and which is a reason why their ways and paths should be abstained from, because they bring upon them swift destruction; it is to their own hurt they run, as Jarchi interprets it; though the first sense seems best to agree with what follows;

and make haste to shed blood; the blood of innocent persons, in order to get their substance, to cover their iniquity and shame, and that no information may be given of them; this is mentioned as having something very horrible in it, in order to deter from joining with them.

Ver. 17. *Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.*] Or “without cause”^{f23}, as the word is rendered in (~~2011~~Proverbs 1:11); and so the words are an illustration of the preceding; showing that the blood of innocent persons is shed without cause, no injury being done by them to those that do it, but is shed without any provocation at all; just as the net is spread for the innocent bird, which has done no harm to the fowler that seeks to take it; so Gersom: or else the sense is, that though the net is spread by the fowler even in the sight of the bird, yet it is in vain to the bird, though not to the fowler; it is so intent upon the corn that is spread about, that it takes no notice of the net, and so is caught in it; and thus it is with those men that are bent upon their sinful practices, upon theft and murder, though their ruin and destruction are before their eyes; and they daily see their companions in iniquity come to an untimely end; they know that they are liable to suffer death by the hand of the civil magistrate, and to be followed by the justice and vengeance of God, and suffer eternal punishment; yet take no warning hereby, but rush on to their own ruin, as follows.

Ver. 18. *And they lay wait for their [own] blood,* etc.] While they lie in wait for the blood of others, they lie in wait for their own; and when they shed the blood of innocent persons, it in the issue comes upon their own heads, and is the cause of their own blood being shed; vengeance pursues them, and justice will not suffer them to live;

they lurk privily for their [own] lives: while they are lurking in secret places to take away, the lives of others, they are laying snares for their own souls; and the consequence of it will be, that they will be brought to a shameful and untimely end here, or, however, to everlasting ruin and destruction hereafter.

Ver. 19. *So [are] the ways of everyone that is greedy of gain,* etc.] That is set upon getting riches in an unlawful way, by robberies and murder; his ways will end in the loss of his own blood and life, and in the loss of his immortal soul; this will be what his wicked ways and course of life will bring him to, and what will his gain profit him then? it would be of no use and service to him could he have gained the whole world;

[which] taketh away the life of the owners thereof: or who, even every one of those that are greedy of gain, and will be rich at any rate; such stick not to take away the life of the proper owners of that gain, or money they are greedy of, in order to get it into their own possession; and such wicked practices cannot fail of meeting with a just recompence of reward: or “which” covetous gain, or gain gotten in such a wicked manner, will be the cause of the life of the injurious masters and wrong possessors of it being taken away from them, either by the hand of the civil magistrate, or by God himself. These sins of robbery and murder are particularly instanced in, not only because other sins lead unto them, as sabbath breaking, drunkenness, and lewdness, and issue in temporal and eternal ruin; but because they were very common among the Jews at the time that Wisdom, or Christ, was here on earth: to which time the whole passage refers, as appears from the following verses; and that those sins were frequent then is manifest both from Scripture; (see ⁴¹⁷⁸ Matthew 27:38 ⁴¹⁸⁰ Luke 10:30 23:19); and from the confessions of the Jews, who say^{f24} that forty years before the destruction of the temple the sanhedrim were obliged to remove from place to place, because that murderers increased, and they could not judge and condemn them, for fear of being murdered themselves; and it was because of this great increase they were obliged to stop the beheading of the red heifer^{f25}.

Ver. 20. *Wisdom crieth without*, etc.] Here the person instructing throughout this whole book is represented under the name of “Wisdom”; by which we are to understand not the attribute of divine wisdom displayed in the works of creation; nor the light of nature in man; nor the law of Moses given to the Israelites; nor the revelation of the divine will in general, as it is delivered out in the sacred Scriptures; nor the Gospel, and the ministry of it, in particular; but our Lord Jesus Christ; for the things spoken of Wisdom, and ascribed to it in this book, especially in the eighth and ninth chapters, show that a divine Person is intended, and most properly belong to Christ; who may be called “Wisdoms”^{f26}, in the plural number, as in the Hebrew text, because of the consummate and perfect wisdom that is in him; as he is a divine Person, he is “the Logos”, the Word and Wisdom of God; as Mediator, “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge [are] hid” in him, (^{500B}Colossians 2:3); and, as man, “the Spirit of Wisdom” rests upon him without measure, (^{2310D}Isaiah 11:2). This, with what follows to the end of the chapter, is a prophecy of the ministry of Christ in the days of his flesh, and of the success of it; and of the calamities that should come upon the Jews for the rejection of him: and Wisdom is here said to “cry”, as Christ did, (⁴⁰⁷²⁸John 7:28,37); the word signifies to cry both in a sorrowful way, as Jesus did when he cried to Jerusalem, weeping over it, (⁴⁰²³⁷Matthew 23:37 ⁴²⁰⁴¹Luke 19:41); and in a joyful one, which well suits with the Gospel, as preached by him; a joyful sound expressed by piping, in opposition to John’s ministry, which was a mournful one, (⁴⁰¹¹⁷Matthew 11:17); for crying here means no other than the preaching of the word; which is such a cry as that of heralds, when they publicly proclaim peace or war; so Wisdom or Christ, is said to “proclaim liberty to the captives”, and “the acceptable year of the Lord”, (²³⁰⁰¹Isaiah 61:1,2). This cry was made “without” the city of Jerusalem, and without that part of the country which was properly called Jewry; Christ first preached in the land of Galilee; or this may mean the Gentile world, where Christ preached, though not in person, yet by his apostles, whom he sent into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature;

she uttereth her voice in the streets: of the city of Jerusalem, and other places; nor is this contrary to (⁴⁰¹²⁹Matthew 12:19); which is to be understood of crying in a bawling and litigious way, of lifting up the voice in self-commendation, neither of which Christ did; and yet might cry and utter his voice in the streets, that is, publicly preach his Gospel there, as he did; and he also sent his servants into the streets and lanes of the city to call

in sinners by the ministry of the word, (^{<2142>}Luke 14:21); which perhaps may be meant of places in the Gentile world; nor is this sense to be excluded here; it may be figuratively understood of the public ministration of the word and ordinances in the church called the streets and broad ways of it, (^{<2182>}Song of Solomon 3:2).

Ver. 21. *She crieth in the chief place of concourse*, etc.] Where a multitude of people meet together; the Targum is,

“on the top of palaces;”

but rather it is to be understood of the synagogues of the Jews, where Christ frequently preached; and which, from hence, they build in the highest part of the city^{f27}; and best of all the temple, whither the tribes of Israel went up to worship in great bodies, and to which the Jews daily resorted; here Christ taught publicly, as he himself says, (^{<6182>}John 18:20);

in the opening of the gates; either of the city, at which people went in and out in great numbers; or of the temple, where they passed and repassed continually on account of worship; (see ^{<6123>}John 10:23 ^{<41810>}Acts 3:10, 11); in allusion hereunto the public worship of God’s house is signified by the gates of Zion, and also of Wisdom, (^{<1872>}Psalms 87:2 ^{<10834>}Proverbs 8:34);

in the city she uttereth her words; the doctrines of the Gospel; even in the city of Jerusalem literally, and in other cities of Judea and Galilee, the singular being put for the plural; and figuratively in the church of God, often compared to a city; and so all these expressions of “without”, in the “streets”, in the “chief place of concourse”, “the opening of the gates”, and “the city”, may denote in general the openness and publicness of the Gospel ministry, both by Christ in his apostles, in Judea, and in the Gentile world; more especially the former;

[*saying*], as follows.

Ver. 22. *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?* etc.] Simple foolish things, agreeably to their character, being weak simple men, men of weak capacities and shallow understandings; and such were the first persons that were called by Christ through the ministry of the word, even effectually; they were babes and sucklings in comparison of others, by whom they were despised as illiterate and ignorant of the law; (see ^{<1125>}Matthew 11:25 ^{<6174>}John 7:49 ^{<4026>}1 Corinthians 1:26,27); though it may respect the Jews in general, who were externally called by Christ, and were

a simple and foolish people, addicted to silly customs and usages, to the traditions of the elders, and loved the folly and darkness of them, and to continue in them, rather than the light of the Gospel, (~~ABD~~ John 3:19,20);

and the scorers delight in their scorning; at Christ, because of the meanness of his parentage and education; at his disciples and followers, at his doctrines and miracles, sufferings and death;

and fools hate knowledge? the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ; the knowledge of the Gospel, and the truths of it; they hated the light of it, and did not care to come to it, but rather loved the darkness of the law, and even of error and infidelity; they hated Christ, the teacher of true and useful knowledge; they hated his person, though without a cause; they hated him in his offices, as a Prophet to instruct them, as a Priest to be the propitiation for them, and as a King to rule over them; such “fools” were they, and who are therefore expostulated with by Wisdom or Christ; which expostulations show their continuance in these things, and the danger they were in by them, the pity and compassion of Christ as man and a minister of the word, and the fervour and importunity of his ministrations.

Ver. 23. *Turn ye at my reproof*, etc.] Or rather “to my reproof”, for the words are not an exhortation to the conversion of the heart, or to him repentance; but to an attendance to the external ministry of the word preached, which reproves of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and does not design the turning of the heart to it, which is God’s work, but the turning of the face and ears to hear it; and so the Targum,

“turn your face to my reproof,”

and not your backs, as they did, showing a dislike of it; or, as Aben Ezra,

“turn ye to hear my reproof;”

turn your ears and listen to it, and do not pull away the shoulder, or stop your ears that you may not hear it;

behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you; not “upon you”, but “unto you”: for the Holy Spirit of God is not here designed, and the effusion of his gifts, ordinary and extraordinary, or of his special grace; but the mind of Wisdom, or Christ, as the word is used in (~~ABD~~ Proverbs 29:11). Some interpret it, “here, my will”^{f28}; the external revelation of his will made in the ministry of the word, by whom “grace and truth”, the doctrines of grace

and truth, “came” in their full extent, (^{<3017>}John 1:17); for as the doctrines of “grace [were] poured into [his] lips”, (^{<3082>}Psalms 45:2), so they were poured out by them again, out of his heart, as out of a fountain or well, as the word^{f29} here used signifies; which denotes the large and abundant revelation of the Gospel by Christ, and is mentioned as an encouragement to men to attend unto it; which sense is confirmed by what follows;

I will make known my words unto you; the doctrines of the Gospel, words of grace and wisdom, and such as never man spake as Christ did, his enemies being witnesses; the words of peace and reconciliation, of life and righteousness, and of eternal salvation, which were made known in a ministerial way by Christ and his apostles; but the Jews were such fools as to hate and despise the knowledge of these things; wherefore it follows:

Ver. 24. *Because I have called, and ye refused*, etc.] This is to be understood not of the internal call of Wisdom, or Christ, which is by the special grace of his Spirit; is according to an eternal purpose, the fruit of everlasting love, peculiar to God’s elect, and by a divine power; and is also a call to special blessings of grace, and to eternal glory; and which is always effectual, unchangeable, and irreversible, and can never be refused, rejected, and resisted, so as to become void and of no effect: but of the external call by the word, to the natural duties of religion, and to an attendance on the means of grace; which may be where no election goes before, no sanctification attends, nor salvation follows, (^{<4116>}Matthew 20:16 22:14); and this may be refused and rejected, as it often is; as when men, notwithstanding that call, do not attend on the ministry of the word, or, if they do, it is in a negligent careless way; or, they show an aversion to it, despise, contradict, and blaspheme it, as the Jews did, who were the persons first called to hear it; (see ^{<4122>}Matthew 22:2-5);

I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; this is a gesture of persons calling to others, as orators and preachers, requiring silence and attention; and when eager and fervent, and importunate in their discourses; it is attributed to Christ, (^{<2382>}Isaiah 65:2 ^{<5121>}Romans 10:21); but, notwithstanding all Wisdom’s eagerness, zeal, warmth, and importunity, expressed by words and gestures, it was all disregarded; no attention was given to it, which is here complained of.

Ver. 25. *But ye have set at nought all my counsel*, etc.] The same with “the counsel of God”, (^{<4027>}Acts 20:27). The whole Gospel, and all the truths of it; the entire scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ, which is the

produce of divine wisdom, and is according to the counsel of the divine will, and his eternal purpose in Christ Jesus; this the Jews set at nought, made no account of, but despised and rejected, as they did Christ, the author of it, (^{<4011>}Acts 4:11,12); as also his ordinances, which go by the same name, because of the wisdom and will of God in them; particularly baptism, rejected by the Scribes and Pharisees, (^{<4071>}Luke 7:30);

and would none of my reproof; would not hearken to it, nor take it, nor receive any instruction from it nor caution by it; did not like it, but contemned it, and trampled upon it; (see ^{<4237>}Matthew 23:37).

Ver. 26. *I also will laugh at your calamity*, etc.] By way of retaliation, measuring measure for measure; even as they scorned him, and delighted in their scorning, now he in his turn will “laugh” at them and their distress; which act is ascribed to the Lord by an anthropopathy; (see ^{<1904>}Psalms 2:4 37:13); signifying that he should not at all pity them, show no compassion to them, and have no mercy upon them; but rather express a pleasure and delight in displaying the glory of his justice in their destruction: the plain sense is, that no favour would be shown them, (^{<2271>}Isaiah 27:11). The word translated “calamity” signifies a “vapour”,^{F30} or cloud; denoting it would be a very dark dispensation with the Jews, as it was when “wrath came upon them to the uttermost”, (^{<3126>}1 Thessalonians 2:16); even on their nation, city, and temple; as in their last destruction by the Romans, which is here intended;

I will mock when your fear cometh; which is the same thing in different words; for by “fear” is meant the dreadful calamity on which brought dread, terror, and consternation with it, and of which they had fearful apprehensions beforehand: wherefore this is mentioned among the signs of Jerusalem’s destruction, “men’s hearts failing them for fear”, (^{<0226>}Luke 21:26).

Ver. 27. *When your fear cometh as desolation*, etc.] When such will be the calamity that will occasion this fear, that it shall be like some desolating judgment, as famine, sword, and pestilence, which lays all waste: and such was the destruction of the Jews by the Romans; it not only laid Jerusalem and the temple waste, but the whole country of Judea. These are the “desolations” said to be “determined”, or “the consummation and that determined”, which should be “poured upon the desolate”, (^{<2085>}Daniel 9:26,27);

and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; suddenly and unthought of, fierce, and boisterous, throwing down and carrying all before it: so the said destruction did; it threw down the walls and houses of the city of Jerusalem, and the temple, and its fine buildings, so that not one stone was left upon another not thrown down, (^{<4142>}Matthew 24:2);

when distress and anguish cometh upon you; as they did at that time with a witness, when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans: what with the sword of the enemy without, and the famine within; together with the vast number of cutthroats and seditious persons among themselves; it was such a time of distress and tribulation as never was from the beginning of the world, nor ever will be, (^{<4142>}Matthew 24:22). Josephus's history of those times is a proper comment on these words.

Ver. 28. *Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer*, etc.] As he called them, and they refused to answer to his call, (^{<4024>}Proverbs 1:24); so it was just in him to return no answer to them, when they called on him to deliver them from the Romans, and save them from ruin: for this was what they called out for, and what they expected, that the Messiah would come and deliver them; this was what they buoyed themselves up with, and made them so desperate to the last;

they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; this is the very thing that Christ told the Jews, and much in the same words with these, (^{<4173>}John 7:34 8:21); for when he was gone, and they were in distress, then they sought after the Messiah, in the desert, and in the secret chambers, and in this and the other place, where they were told he was; but, alas! they could not find him: the true Messiah, whom they had rejected, was come and gone, and would return no more, until his second coming to judgment; or, however, till he came in his kingdom and power, to their ruin and destruction; of which coming of his the Scriptures often speak.

Ver. 29. *For that they hated knowledge*, etc.] Spiritual and evangelical; the knowledge of the Scriptures, of the promises and prophecies of them respecting the Messiah, though they were called upon and exhorted to "search" them; the knowledge of the Messiah, his person, offices, and grace; the knowledge of his Gospel, and the doctrines of it; (see ^{<4022>}Proverbs 1:22);

and did not choose the fear of the Lord; which is the beginning of knowledge, (^{<4007>}Proverbs 1:7); instead of choosing, they cast off the fear of

the Lord; and by their rejection of the Messiah, and their usage of him, it plainly appeared that the fear of God was not before their eyes nor upon their hearts; nor did they choose or care for the pure, spiritual, and evangelical worship of God, introduced in the Gospel dispensation; the ordinances of Christ they did not choose to submit to; and would neither go into the kingdom of God or Gospel church state themselves, nor suffer those that were entering to go in, (^{<42313>}Matthew 23:13); but rather chose their superstition and will worship, according to the tradition of the elders, by which they made the word and worship of God of none effect.

Ver. 30. *They would none of my counsel*, etc.] Neither his doctrines nor his ordinances; nor would they attend to the wholesome counsel and advice he gave them in his sermons upon the mount, and in other discourses of his at other times and places;

they despised all my reproof; for their hypocrisy, uncleanness, covetousness, and other sins they were addicted to; (see ^{<42313>}Matthew 23:1-36); but they “derided” him for it, (^{<2164>}Luke 16:14); where the same word is used as is by the Septuagint here. These things are repeated from (^{<31025>}Proverbs 1:25), to observe their ingratitude, and how just was their ruin, and what the true cause of it.

Ver. 31. *Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way*, etc.] Their evil ways; be punished according to their deserts, and receive the just reward of their iniquities; (see ^{<3380>}Isaiah 3:10,11);

and be filled with their own devices; or “counsels”^{f31}: their device and counsel was to put Christ to death; to deliver him to the Roman governor, that he might be crucified, as he was: and they afterwards had their bellyful of crucifixion, as the word^{f32} used signifies; such vast numbers of them were crucified by the Romans before the walls of the city, five hundred a day, and sometimes more; insomuch that room was needed for crosses, and crosses for bodies^{f33}.

Ver. 32. *For the turning away of the simple shall slay them*, etc.] Or be the cause of their being slain; even their turning away from Christ, their aversion to him; their turning their backs on him, and a deaf ear to him; their turning away from his Gospel, and putting it from them, thereby judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life: in all which they showed themselves to be the “simple” and “foolish” persons they were; and for which wrath and ruin came upon them, and they were slain with the sword

and famine, and by one another. Some render it, as Aben Ezra, “the rest” or “quietness of the simple”^{f34}, etc. taking up their rest in themselves, and in their observance of ceremonies and traditions; and crying Peace, peace, when sudden destruction was at hand: or a stubborn hardened rest in sin, a seared conscience; having no sense of guilt, nor fear of punishment; living in carnal security till death should seize upon them;

and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them; that is, the abuse of it; leading them to commit sins, which bring destruction upon them; or, seeing sinners live with impunity, and prosper in the world, take encouragement from thence to indulge themselves in sin, which is their ruin; or, being in prosperity, think it will always be well with them, and therefore put away the evil day far from them, which comes upon them at an unawares; which was the case of the Jews.

Ver. 33. *But whoso hearkeneth unto me*, etc.] To Wisdom, or Christ; to the cry and call above; to the voice of his Gospel, not only externally, but internally; so as spiritually and experimentally to understand it, to distinguish it from the voice of a stranger; so as to approve of it, and receive it in the love of it, and to delight and take pleasure in it; so as to feel the power of it, and believe it; not only give an assent unto it, but by faith receive it, and appropriate the things of it to a man’s self: and also to the voice of his precepts, his ordinances; so as to yield a cheerful obedience to them, from a principle of love, with a view to his glory, and without trusting to and depending upon it. Such

shall dwell safely; as they must indeed, since they dwell in God; in his heart, “the secret place of the most High”; and in his everlasting and unchangeable love, wherefore they are not consumed; and in the covenant of his grace, which is firm, and sure, and immovable; and in his power, by and in which they are kept, as in a garrison, fortress, or strong hold: and they dwell in Christ the Rock of ages, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, and on which their souls are built; and so remain safe amidst the floods, storms, and tempests, that beat upon them; the refuge to which they flee, the strong hold to which they turn, and whither they run and are safe; the ark in which they ride safely, amidst all the waves and billows of affliction and tribulation; their place of defence, where they are safe from Satan; and are in his hands out of which none can pluck them, the Lord their righteousness, by whom Judah is saved, and under whom Israel dwells safely; being by his righteousness secure from divine justice,

from the curse of the law, and from wrath to come: besides, such have the Spirit dwelling in them, who is greater than he that is in the world; who when he, the enemy, comes in upon them as a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him; angels are their guardians, encamp about them; and they are the inhabitants of a strong city, which has salvation for walls and bulwarks; and especially they will dwell safely in the other world, in those mansions and everlasting habitations in Christ's Father's house he is preparing for them; which are sure dwellings, as well as quiet resting places, as follows;

and shall be quiet from fear of evil; as they may be in the present life, under a comfortable sense of the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ: which, when applied and laid hold on by faith, speak peace to the conscience, and yield quietness of mind; so that such have no reason to be afraid of the evil one, Satan, who cannot devour and destroy them; nor of the evil of sin; for, though they may and should be afraid to commit it, yet not of being conquered by it, and coming under the dominion of it, nor of being brought by it into a state of condemnation; nor of the evil of judgments upon a wicked world; nor of death and a future judgment; nor of hell, and everlasting damnation: and hereafter such will enter into peace, and be free from all evils, natural, moral, or spiritual; and from the fear of them, being out of the reach of them all. The safety and protection of those that hearken to Christ, and believe in him, here promised, had a remarkable accomplishment in the believing Jews; who, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, were warned to go out from thence to a place called Pella, beyond Jordan^{f35} as they did, and where they were safe.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 2

This chapter directs to the means of attaining to the knowledge of divine things, and shows the profit and advantage arising from thence. The means are, embracing the doctrines of the Gospel, and retaining in memory and affection the ordinances of it, (~~2111~~Proverbs 2:1); and an inclination of the ear and an application of the heart to the knowledge of these things, (~~2112~~Proverbs 2:2). An earnest and importunate desire, expressed by prayer, after the same, (~~2113~~Proverbs 2:3); and a diligent and unwearied search for them, as for silver and hid treasure, (~~2114~~Proverbs 2:4). The advantages are, that such shall attain to the fear and knowledge of God; which may be concluded from these being the gift of God to his people, and from their being laid up for them, whom he carefully keeps and preserves, (~~2115~~Proverbs 2:5-8); and not only so, but such learn to do that which is just and right among men, (~~2116~~Proverbs 2:9). And, besides, such is the nature of divine wisdom, that, when it has once got a place in the heart and in the affections, it will be a means of preserving both from the ways of evil men, (~~2117~~Proverbs 2:10-12); who are described, (~~2118~~Proverbs 2:13-15). And from the evil woman, whose character is given, (~~2119~~Proverbs 2:16,17); whose vicious course of life, and the ways she leads persons into, are represented as very dangerous, (~~2120~~Proverbs 2:18,19). And, on the contrary, such is the usefulness of true wisdom, that it leads into the way of good men, who will be happy and safe, when the wicked shall be destroyed, (~~2121~~Proverbs 2:20-22).

Ver. 1. *My son*, etc.] These are either the continuation of the words of Solomon to his son Rehoboam; or to anyone that came to him for instruction, or was within the reach of being taught by him; whom he addresses in this tender and affectionate manner, in order to gain his attention to what he was about to say: or else they are the words of Wisdom, or Christ, continued, thus bespeaking: his children and people; and giving them some very wholesome counsel and advice, backed with the most powerful and prevailing arguments;

if thou wilt receive my words; or doctrines: the doctrines of the Gospel, relating to the person, office, and grace of Christ, and salvation by him; such as the words of peace, pardon, righteousness, and life; which are to be received, not as the word of man, but as the word of God; and with all readiness of mind and willingness, as they were by the Bereans; and most gladly, as by the three thousand pricked to the heart under Peter's sermon; and as they are and will be by every sensible sinner;

and hide my commandments with thee; in the heart; so as to have a high esteem of them, and a hearty affection and value for them; retain them in memory, and frequently think of them and meditate upon them, and constantly observe them; (see ^{<B11>}Psalm 119:11,127,128).

Ver. 2. *So that thou incline thine ear unto Wisdom*, etc.] Harken to Wisdom, that is, Christ; or rather to the instruction of Wisdom, which is the Gospel; so called, because it is the produce of divine wisdom, what the wisdom of man could never have devised, and which it opposes; and in which there is a most glorious display of the wisdom of God, in the justification and salvation of his people by Christ, (^{<B16>}1 Corinthians 2:6,7); and is worth listening unto with the greatest attention, which is what is designed by this expression;

[and] apply thine heart to understanding; to a spiritual and experimental understanding of the Gospel, and the truths of it: for an inclination of the ear, without an application of the heart, which signifies the intenseness of the mind, an earnest and hearty desire after knowledge, will signify nothing; a hypocrite may seemingly hear with great attention, and show much affection, and yet his heart be after the world and the things of it, (^{<B31>}Ezekiel 33:31); (see ^{<B12>}Psalm 119:112).

Ver. 3. *Yea, if thou criest after knowledge*, etc.] Of God, Christ, and the Gospel; not only bow the ear and bend the mind to these things, but importunately and fervently pray for them; not only attend the ministry of the word by men, but cry to God to give the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of divine and spiritual things; which supposes some sense of a want of it, an hearty desire for it, having some apprehension of the worth and value of it; and that it is to be had, as there is indeed great reason to hope for and expect it, (^{<B5>}James 1:5);

[and] liftest up thy voice for understanding; for Christ, who is understanding as well as wisdom, (^{<B4>}Proverbs 8:14); or rather for an

understanding of the Gospel and the mysteries of it, which men do not naturally understand; and for which there must be an understanding given, or the eyes of the understanding must be enlightened; or Christ, by his spirit and grace, must open the understanding, that it may understand these things; which is granted to those who lift up their voice in prayer for it.

Ver. 4. *If thou seekest her as silver*, etc.] That is, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding; which all signify and relate unto one and the same thing, expressed here by “her”: namely, the doctrine of wisdom, or Christ; that is, the Gospel, and a spiritual and experimental knowledge and understanding of it, and the truths thereof; which are as desirable and valuable as silver, and more so; and which may be fitly compared to it, and be preferred before it, for their purity, solidity, and duration; (see ^{<13972>}Psalm 119:72 ^{<1382>}1 Corinthians 3:12); and are to be sought after with as much and more eagerness, affection, and diligence, as silver is by those who are most covetous of it, (^{<1380>}Proverbs 8:10);

and searchest for her as [for] hid treasures; the Gospel is a treasure, (^{<1017>}2 Corinthians 4:7); an accumulation of riches. It contains rich truths, things valuable for their antiquity; for being far fetched and dearly bought, coming from heaven, and sealed by the blood of Christ, and the holy martyrs of Jesus; and for the abundance of them; there are treasures of wisdom and knowledge in the Gospel, and in Christ the sum and substance of it, who is full of truth as well as grace, (^{<6014>}3 John 1:14). It contains rich blessings of grace, such as are spiritual, solid, and substantial, sure and irreversible; and a multitude of them, (^{<6153>}Romans 15:29); and also rich promises, exceeding great and precious ones; which are absolute and unconditional, suited to the various cases of God’s people, and sure to all the seed: and it reveals the riches of God’s goodness, his special goodness in Christ; the unsearchable riches of Christ; and the riches both of grace and glory. And under this notion of a treasure is it to be searched for, and as an hid treasure; in allusion to what is laid up in the cabinets of princes, or lies in the bowels of the earth, as precious stones: Pliny^{f36} says, that “topazin”, in the language of the Troglodytes, has the signification of seeking, because “topazes” are diligently sought for and searched after; (see Gill on “^{<13319>}Job 28:19”). The Gospel, and the truths of it, were greatly hid under the former dispensation from the Gentile world, and very much from the Jews themselves; being wrapped up in dark prophecies, obscure hints, and shadowy types and sacrifices; and are now, and always were, entirely hid from the wicked and reprobate part of the world, from them

that are lost, and from God's own elect before conversion. This is "the fellowship of the mystery" that was "hid in God", in his heart, from all eternity, (^{488B}Ephesians 3:9,10): the truths of it are the "treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid" in Christ, (^{500B}Colossians 2:3); and likewise the "treasure hid [in the] field" of the Scriptures, (^{424B}Matthew 22:44); which therefore are to be searched into for them, with like labour and resolution with which men dig into the earth, to find the rich ore that is in the bowels of it: and this should be done by diligent reading them; by frequent and deep meditation on them; by constant hearing the truths of the Gospel preached; by earnest prayer for the illumination of the divine Spirit to understand them; and by all the help of the writings of good men, and conversation with them, that can be had. These are things to be sought for and searched after, in the first place, in the early time of life; and with the utmost diligence and labour, as being of the greatest moment and importance.

Ver. 5. *Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord*, etc.] The grace of fear, and the exercise of it: which is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge, and is a treasure itself, (^{2000B}Proverbs 1:7 9:10 ^{2336B}Isaiah 33:6). By means of the Gospel the Lord works it in the hearts of his people by his Spirit; and by the same leads them into the riches of his special grace and "goodness", which they are influenced by to "fear", and the Lord for the sake of it: and particularly they are led hereby to the pardoning grace and mercy of God, which is with him, that he may "be feared"; and it is the Gospel which induces and encourages a true filial fear of God, by which men "depart from evil"; for that teaches them to deny all manner of sin, and to live a godly life and conversation: so that through a diligent search after the knowledge of the Gospel, and an attaining it, men come to have a spiritual, experimental, and practical understanding of the fear of God as a grace; and also, as it includes the whole worship of God, by means of Gospel light, they come to understand what sort of worship that is God is to be worshipped with; that it is pure, spiritual, and evangelical, suited to his nature and will: what the ordinances of divine service are; and that these are to be kept as they were delivered, and in the exercise of faith, from a principle of love, and with a view to the glory, of God, without trusting to them or depending on them for salvation. And this is the advantage arising from a diligent search after the doctrine of wisdom, or the Gospel, and a knowledge and understanding of it; and is used as an argument encouraging to it; and another follows;

and find the knowledge of God; such a knowledge of God as is not to be found by the light of nature, in the whole volume of the creatures, and in all the writings of the philosophers; no, nor in the law of Moses; for though much of God and his perfections may be seen and known by the things that are made, and much of the will of God by the law he gave; yet by neither of these is the knowledge of God in Christ, which is “life eternal”. This only is to be found in the Gospel, and by means of it; here only it is brought to light; and through this men not only find it, but increase more and more in it: herein is a glorious display of his persons and perfections, of his counsels and purposes, of his covenant and promises, of his mind and will, with respect to doctrine and worship; and of the way of peace, life, and salvation, by Jesus Christ; which must serve greatly to engage and excite persons to a diligent search and pursuit after it. And all that is here said is designed to encourage a diligent search after divine things; for, as the poet^{f37} says, there is nothing so difficult but by searching may be found out.

Ver. 6. *For the Lord giveth wisdom*, etc.] Natural wisdom in all its branches, with all its improvements, and in its utmost latitude and perfection; and spiritual wisdom, which lies in the knowledge of a man’s self, his own folly, impurity, impotence, and misery; being wise unto salvation; in the knowledge of Christ, as the only way of salvation, and of God in Christ; in partaking of the true grace, which is wisdom in the hidden part; in being acquainted experimentally with the doctrines of the Gospel; and in walking wisely and circumspectly, and as becomes it, which is practical wisdom: and all this is the gift of God; as is also Christ, who is wisdom, and is given to be wisdom to his people. He is the gift of God to them, in all characters he bears, and relations he stands in; he is a very large comprehensive gift, an unspeakable one; which is given freely and liberally, and is never taken away again. Now this is said, partly to caution such who search after wisdom, and find it, not to attribute it to their diligence and industry, but to the grace of God; and partly as a direction where to go for it; and as an encouragement to hope to have it, since the Lord freely gives it, (~~SOME~~ James 1:5);

out of his mouth [cometh] knowledge and understanding; by the prophets of the Old Testament who came with a “Thus saith the Lord”, and were the mouth of the Lord to the people; from whence flowed the knowledge of divine things; of the will of God; of the Messiah, his person and offices; of his coming, sufferings, death and salvation by him: and by his Son, by whom he has spoke in these last days, and has declared all his mind; and by

whom the doctrines of grace and truth, and the knowledge of them, are come fully and clearly, (^{<3006>}Hebrews 1:1 ^{<4017>}John 1:17,18); and by the Scriptures of truth, both of the Old and of the New Testament, which are the word of God; what are breathed by him and come out of his mouth, and are able to make men wise unto salvation: and by the ministers of the Gospel, who speak in the name of the Lord, and the Lord by them; and by means of whom he imparts much spiritual and evangelical knowledge to the sons of men; the mouth of a Gospel minister, who is the month of God to men, “speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment”, (^{<4873>}Psalm 37:30). This clause is added, to encourage to a search after wisdom in the use of means; namely, by attending on the word, and the ministry of it.

Ver. 7. *He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous*, etc.] In order to give it to them that seek for it; which is another encouragement to search after it. By “sound wisdom” may be meant, not the law, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; so called, because it endures for ever, when all beings are defective and come to nothing; but the Gospel, which is sound doctrine, pure and not corrupt; true and real wisdom, in opposition to that which has only the show of wisdom, and is science falsely so called; and this was hid in God, in Christ, and laid up as a treasure in the sacred Scriptures: or else the true grace of God, in distinction from that which is counterfeit; and is that goodness of his, which he has laid up in his heart, and in the covenant of his grace; and the fulness of grace which he has laid up in Christ for them (^{<4919>}Psalm 31:19); or eternal glory and happiness. The word here used signifies “essence”, “substance”^{f38}; that which really is, and is solid and substantial; and such are the glories of the other world the crown of righteousness, the hope laid up in heaven, and the inheritance reserved there, (^{<5005>}Colossians 1:5 ^{<5048>}2 Timothy 4:8 ^{<6004>}1 Peter 1:4). These are real things, though invisible, and are rich and valuable; and have substance and solidity in them, in opposition to earthly riches, which are a vain show, and are things that are not, and at best temporal and perishing; but these are an enduring substance, (^{<2082>}Proverbs 8:21 23:5 ^{<3034>}Hebrews 10:34). The Septuagint render it by “salvation”, and the Targum by a word which signifies “glory” and “honour”; all which may well be understood of eternal life which is laid up and reserved “for the righteous”: not for such who are only so in show and imagination, but for those who are really and truly so; not for those who are legally, but evangelically righteous; or not for such that seek righteousness by the law, but by faith in Christ; for such who are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and by

faith receive it, and lay hold on it as their righteousness; and in consequence of this live soberly and righteously: for these only eternal life is prepared; they only have a right unto it, and a meetness for it, and shall enjoy it;

[he is] a buckler to them that walk uprightly; who are sincere in their deportment before God and men; who walk according to the rule of the divine word; who walk by faith on Christ, and walk on in him as they have received him; and go on living by faith on his righteousness, which is walking in his uprightness, till they come to be with him for ever in heaven. To these the Lord is a “buckler” or shield; he covers them with the “shield of faith”, his own Son, his blood righteousness, and sacrifice; which faith lays hold on and uses as a shield against Satan’s fiery darts; and gives them “the shield of salvation” which secures them from sin and wrath and every enemy; and encompasses them about with his “favour”, as a “shield”, which is immutable and invariable; and keeps them by his power through faith unto salvation, (^{<4116>}Ephesians 6:16 ^{<4935>}Psalms 18:35 5:12 ^{<4005>}1 Peter 1:5); with this compare (^{<4150>}Genesis 15:1) (^{<4088>}Psalms 3:3 18:2 84:11). Some^{f39} read these words by way of apposition, and understand them of sound wisdom; that that is a buckler or shield to the persons here described; (see ^{<2072>}Ecclesiastes 7:12).

Ver. 8. *He keepeth the paths of judgment*, etc.] That is, the Lord keeps them; he does that which is just and right himself, in the course of his providence, and in the methods of his grace; and as he guides the feet of his people in the ways of righteousness and holiness, he keeps them there from turning out of them. The words may be rendered, “to keep the paths of judgment”^{f40}; and so expresses the end, fruit, and effect of the Lord’s being a buckler to them, as he is said to be in (^{<2007>}Proverbs 2:7): he is their shield and protection, so as either to keep them in the right ways in which they should go; or that they might studiously observe them, and keep walking therein, without stumbling in them, or declining from them;

and preserveth the way of his saints; to whom he has been kind and bountiful; or who have been merciful, liberal, and generous to others; who having partook of the grace of God themselves, are useful to men: the Targum calls them “righteous ones”. These the Lord preserves by his power and grace, in the way in which he has led them, and which is his own way, safe to his kingdom and glory: for none of his saints, his holy and

righteous ones, shall ever perish; the way in which he directs them, and in which he keeps them, leads to everlasting life; see (^(~~911B~~)1 Samuel 2:9).

Ver. 9. *Then shalt thou understand righteousness and judgment*, etc.] This is another fruit and effect of the Gospel, and of a spiritual understanding of it; that besides the knowledge of God, and how to behave with reverence towards him, (^(~~911B~~)Proverbs 2:5); it leads men into a notion of doing that which is right and just among men; it gives them not only a theoretic but a practical understanding of justice, and a true judgment of what is right and wrong; or gives such an understanding thereof as that they practise it; for it teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly, (^(~~911B~~)Titus 2:11,12). It is not only a revelation and ministration of the righteousness of Christ as the only matter of a sinner's justification before God; and informs a man's judgment so that he can distinguish between truth and error, right and wrong, good and bad notions and practices; but it influences his actions, life, and conversation, and engages him to do works of righteousness from the best principles, upon the best motives, and with the best views;

and equity; [yea], every good path; that is, so to understand equity, as to do that which is equitable between man and man; and to understand every good path which the word of God directs to, even all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, so as to walk in them; these things the Gospel acquaints men with, and urges them to observe: or the words may be rendered, either "the rectitude" or "equity of fall good paths", as the Syriac version; how just, and right, and plain, and equitable, everyone is, and therefore ought to be walked in; or "plainnesses", or "most plain", is or shall be "every good path"^{f41}, to them that have a spiritual and experimental knowledge of the Gospel; and by it an understanding of their duty. One word signifies "plain" and "straight", and another "round"^{f42}, and both are true of the path of righteousness; for though it is a circle of duty saints walk in, yet straight and plain.

Ver. 10. *When wisdom entereth into thine heart*, etc.] Either Christ, the Wisdom of God; who enters there at conversion, and sets up a throne in the heart, and dwells there by faith: or else the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery; which enters not into the head only, as in hypocrites and formal professors; nor into the natural affections, as in the stony ground hearers; but into the heart, opened by the Spirit of God to receive it, so as to have a spiritual understanding of it; which is done when the Gospel comes not in word only, but in the demonstration and power of the Spirit;

when a man truly understands it, approves of it, loves it, believes it; and it has a place in his heart, and richly dwells there;

and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; which the Gospel thus entering gives; even the knowledge of God in Christ, as the God of all grace, as gracious and merciful, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the knowledge of Christ, as the only Redeemer and Saviour; and the knowledge of Gospel truths, which lead and relate unto him: all which is pleasant to a gracious soul, and affords unspeakable delight to the mind; and is sweeter, as every truth of the Gospel is, than the honey or the honeycomb; (see ~~2063~~ Proverbs 16:24).

Ver. 11. *Discretion shall preserve thee*, etc.] Which wisdom or the Gospel gives, or the Lord by the means of it; for the Gospel makes a man wise and discreet in the business of salvation, and in his conduct and deportment; and the discretion it gives him will put him upon his guard, and direct him to watch against every error, and every false way. And so the words may be rendered, “discretion will watch over thee”; to keep thee from everything pernicious in doctrine and practice. The Septuagint version renders it, “good counsel”; which wisdom gives, and the Gospel is full of; and which, if attended to, is a means of the preservation of the saints;

understanding shall keep thee; which is only the same thing expressed in other words. The Septuagint version renders it, “an holy thought”; and the Arabic version, “a just thought shall preserve thee in thy last times”. What these are a means of keeping and preserving from is explained in the following verses.

Ver. 12. *To deliver thee from the way of the evil [man]*, etc.] Who is so by nature and practice, who is hardened in sin and abandoned to it, whose course of life is evil, and who endeavours to draw others into the same evil practices; now the Gospel, and a spiritual knowledge of it, are a means of preserving men from following the examples of such persons, and from walking with them in the ways of sin: or from “the evil way”⁴³, from every evil way, from a vicious course of life; not from idolatry only, as some interpret it, though this may be included, and chiefly designed; but from all manner of sin, from everything that is contrary to the law of God and sound doctrine;

from the man that speaketh froward things; perverse things, things contrary to the light of nature, to divine revelation, to the word of God,

both law and Gospel; if a single man is meant, he might be thought to be the man of sin, antichrist, who has a mouth speaking blasphemies against God, his name, his tabernacle, and them that dwell therein, (~~613B~~ Revelation 13:5,6); and the Gospel delivers men from following him, and falling in with his perverse doctrines and practices; but the word seems to be a collective one, and to be understood of all wicked men, to whom the description agrees, as it is explained in the following verses in the plural number; who out of their evil hearts, and the abundance of wickedness there, speak evil things, tending to debauch the minds and manners of others; to be delivered from whom is a singular mercy. Jarchi restrains this to heretics, and such as caused Israel to apostatize to idolatry, and turned the law into evil. The Gospel is undoubtedly a means of preserving from error and heresy.

Ver. 13. *Who leave the paths of uprightness*, etc.] Or “righteousness”, or the “right [and plain] ways”^{f44}; which the light of nature and the law of God, and especially the Gospel of Christ, direct to; and in which they have been trained up, having had a religious education; for it supposes them to have been externally in these ways, since they are said to leave them; for though persons do not easily and ordinarily leave the ways they have been brought up in, yet sometimes they do; and there are instances of it, and such generally are the worst of men;

to walk in the ways of darkness: sin, ignorance, and infidelity; in which they that walk know not where they are, nor whither they are a going, and which must be very uncomfortable as well as dangerous; in which only works of darkness are done, and which lead to blackness of darkness, the darkness of hell; a miserable choice, a sad change this! So Schultens renders it, “ways of horrid darkness”.

Ver. 14. *Who rejoice to do evil*, etc.] At the doing of it, or when they have done it; they are glad of an opportunity of doing mischief, and glory when they have done it; it is a sport and pastime to them, (~~210B~~ Proverbs 10:2); they take pleasure in the act of sin, and have no remorse of conscience afterwards; they speak of it in an exulting manner, and boast of it, and glory in their shame;

[and] delight in the frowardness of the wicked: of the wicked man, as Aben Ezra and Gersom supply it; in the perversities and contradictions of every wicked man; they not only take pleasure in their own sins, but in the sins of others, and in them that commit them; which is an aggravation of

their wickedness, (^{<5112>}Romans 1:32); they delight to hear a man speak froward and perverse things; things against God, and Christ, and religion, against all good men, and everything that is good; against the Gospel, the doctrines and ordinances of it; and they delight to see him do things perverse and contrary to the will of God. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, “they exult in the worst things”.

Ver. 15. *Whose ways [are] crooked*, etc.] Which swerve from and are not agreeably to the rule of the divine word, either the law of God or the Gospel of Christ; sin is an aberration, a straying from the rule of God’s word, a transgression of his law; and a walk in it is unbecoming the Gospel of Christ; it has many serpentine windings and turnings in it; full of distortions and excursions, and many retrograde actions; (see ^{<4937>}Psalm 125:5 ^{<2818>}Isaiah 59:8);

and [they] froward in their paths; declining here and there, sometimes going one way and sometimes another, but always following that which is evil, and resolute to continue therein.

Ver. 16. *To deliver thee from the strange woman*, etc.] As the Gospel of Christ and its doctrines, or the instructions of wisdom, are a means of delivering persons from the evil man, his company, ways, and works; so from a naughty woman, an adulteress, called a “strange” woman; not because of another nation, or unknown, but because she belongs to another person, and not to him whom she entices into her embraces. Gersom interprets this of the sensitive appetite, and Jarchi of idolatry; as others do also of superstition and all false doctrine, and everything that is contrary to true wisdom; and the whole that is here and afterwards said may well enough be applied to the whore of Rome, from whose fornication, or spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry, will worship, and antichristian doctrines, the Gospel delivers men; see (^{<3117>}Proverbs 7:5), etc.

[even] from the stranger [which] flattereth with her words; that useth smooth and soft words to work upon the passions, move the affections, and win the hearts of men; and ensnare them and draw them to commit wickedness with her; (see ^{<3118>}Proverbs 5:3 7:21); and so antichrist, and all false teachers and heretics, with good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple, (^{<5118>}Romans 16:18).

Ver. 17. *Which forsaketh the guide of her youth*, etc.] Not God, the God of her life, and who had provided for her from her youth up; nor her parent

that had taken care of her in her infancy, and had been the guardian of her virgin state; but her husband, to whom she was married in her youth, and to whom she gave up herself to be guided and directed, ruled and governed, by: and as it is an aggravation of evil in a man to deal treacherously against the wife of his youth, and the wife of his covenant, (³¹²⁴Malachi 2:14); so it is in a woman to forsake “the friend” or “companion of her youth”^{f45}, as the phrase may be rendered; who loved her and espoused her in his youthful age, and with whom he had lived long in love and friendship, and in great happiness, but now forsakes him; her affections being alienated from him, leaves his company and bed, and associates with others. Gersom interprets this of the human understanding, appointed to govern the other powers and faculties of the soul;

and forgetteth the covenant of her God: not the covenant made with Noah, in which adultery, as well as other things, were forbidden; nor the law of Moses, or covenant at Sinai, in which it was condemned; but the marriage covenant, which she entered into with her husband when espoused to him, and when they mutually obliged themselves to be faithful to one another: and this is called “the covenant of God”; not only because God is the author and institutor of marriage, and has directed and enjoined persons to enter into such a contract with one another; but because he is present at it, and is a witness of such an engagement, and is appealed unto in it; which, as it adds to the solemnity of it, makes the violation of it the more criminal. So the church of Rome has forsook Christ, who was her guide in her first settlement, and her husband she professed to be espoused to, as a chaste virgin; and has followed other lovers, and become the mother of harlots; so false teachers leave their guide, the Scriptures, and bring in damnable heresies, and deny the Lord that bought them, (^{600E}2 Peter 2:1).

Ver. 18. *For her house inclineth unto death,* etc.] Bends, verges, and points that way; it lies in the way to death, and brings unto it, and sinks into it as into a ditch; or all that are in her house, that are familiar with her, live and dwell with her, and commit wickedness with her; these incline or are liable to lose, and do lose, their name, character, and reputation, which is a death upon them; and bring diseases upon their bodies, which issue in corporeal death; or are in danger of dying by the hand of the injured husband, or the civil magistrate; and also are exposed unto eternal death: or “she inclines to death, which is her house”^{f46}, so Aben Ezra and Kimchi; and to which the Targum agrees,

“for in the pit of death is her house:”

that is, the house she at last comes to and must dwell in, and all that are ensnared by her; (see ^{<1015>}Proverbs 5:5 ^{<6018>}Revelation 21:8); and the second death will be the portion of the whore of Rome and all her followers, (^{<6440>}Revelation 14:10,11 17:8 19:20);

and her paths unto the dead; that is, her evil ways in which she walks, and into which she draws others to join with her; these lead both her and them to the “damned”^{f47} in hell, to keep company with them, and be punished as they are: the word “rephaim”, here used, sometimes signifies “giants”, and so the Targum renders it here; and may refer to the giants of the old world, who were cut off for their debauchery and uncleanness, (^{<1006>}Genesis 6:4,11,12); and with whom such persons shall be for ever.

Ver. 19. *None that go unto her return again*, etc.] That is, those that commit whoredom with her return not again by repentance, and to a sober and chaste way of living, at least but very few; hence some of the ancients thought adultery was the unpardonable sin; but it is certain that some have been recovered by the power of divine grace, and have been brought to repentance for their impure manner of life, and have truly believed in Christ, and lived sober and godly lives afterwards; but, as the Targum adds, they do not return “in peace”, but with great distress of mind, remorse of conscience, and bitterness of soul; and these instances are rare; generally speaking, such as are ensnared by an adulterous woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and whose hands are as bands, are held so fast by her that they seldom get out again, though some few may escape, (^{<2076>}Ecclesiastes 7:26). The words may be rendered, “all that go into her”^{f48} shall not return again”; no, very few of them. And it is a very rare thing, when men are fallen into idolatry, superstition, will worship, and heresy, that they are recovered out of this snare of the devil; there is a peradventure they may, but it is not often that they be loosed from it, (^{<5125>}2 Timothy 2:25,26);

neither take they hold of the paths of life; Christ, and the ways of Christ, which lead to eternal life; few there be that find these paths and walk in them, (^{<4074>}Matthew 7:14); and especially such as are drawn aside by an impure woman, they are held so fast by her alluring charms, and so bewildered by her art of deceiving, that they are like persons that are led out of their way, and cannot find it again.

Ver. 20. *That thou mayest walk in the way of good [men]*, etc.] Who are not so by nature, but made so by the grace of God; such as the saints, prophets, and patriarchs of old; and who walked in the way of righteousness, holiness, and truth; being directed therein by the Spirit and word of God: now the use and profit of wisdom's instructions, or of the Gospel of Christ, and the doctrines of it, and a spiritual understanding of them, are not only to deliver men from the wicked man and the naughty woman, but also to influence and engage them to follow the examples of good men, and to walk in the same good old paths as they have done, (³⁰¹²Hebrews 6:12);

and keep the paths of the righteous; not only observe them and walk in them, but continue therein, even in the paths of faith and holiness; for righteous men, such as are made righteous by the righteousness of Christ, and are anew created unto righteousness and true holiness, and in consequence thereof live righteously; these walk by faith on Christ, and as becomes his Gospel; and in all the ordinances of it, and in all the duties of religion; and the Gospel teaches all those that receive and profess it to do the same.

Ver. 21. *For the upright shall dwell in the land*, etc.] Such as are upright in heart, who have a right spirit renewed in them; whose hearts are right with God, have the truth of grace in them; whose faith is unfeigned, their love without dissimulation, and their hope without hypocrisy; and who are upright in their lives and conversations; these being Israelites according to the flesh, as well as Israelites indeed in a spiritual sense, shall dwell in the land of Canaan, which the Lord promised to such, and which good men enjoyed by virtue of it: or the sense is, that such shall dwell peaceably and quietly in the world, and possess the good things of it, though in a small quantity, in such a comfortable manner, with the love of God and a sense of it, as wicked men do not; or else they shall inhabit the world to come, as Jarchi interprets it; not only a future state of happiness in heaven, but the Messiah's kingdom on earth, the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, (⁶¹¹³2 Peter 3:13);

and the perfect shall remain in it; or "be left in it"^{f49}; or shall be "strengthened"^{f50}, confirmed, and established in it; or they shall dwell in it as a tent or tabernacle, bound with strong cords; see (²³³¹Isaiah 33:20); or continue there, when others should have no place in it, as follows. By the "perfect" are meant such as have all grace seminally implanted in them,

though it is not come up to maturity; who have a perfection of parts, but not of degrees; are properly men in Christ, though they are not arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; are perfectly holy in Christ, though not in themselves; and are perfectly justified by his righteousness, and perfectly comely through his comeliness, though as yet imperfect in themselves; and those that shall dwell in the new heavens and new earth, and remain there a thousand years, shall be entirely perfect in soul and body, wholly without sin; and complete in knowledge, holiness, and peace: the Targum renders it, who are “without spot”, undefiled persons; such who are not defiled with women, with the strange woman before mentioned; whose garments are not defiled, and who are free from the pollution of false doctrine, will worship, superstition, and idolatry, (~~4004~~ Revelation 3:4 14:4).

Ver. 22. *But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth*, etc.] Suddenly by death; or in a judicial way by the hand of the civil magistrate, before they have lived out half their days; and shall not enjoy the good things of the earth they have been seeking for, and laying up, and promising themselves a long and quiet possession of; but, on the contrary, like unfruitful trees, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire; and, however, shall not dwell in the second Adam’s earth, in the new earth, but shall perish out of his land, (~~4906~~ Psalm 10:16); see (~~4970~~ Psalm 37:2,9,22,28,38);

and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it; such as have acted treacherously and perfidiously^{f51}, and are opposed to upright men; as the wicked are to the righteous, pure, and spotless; these shall not only be cut off as trees to the stump, but be rooted up, and have neither root nor branch left them; they shall have no posterity to succeed them, and their memory shall utterly perish; (see ~~3901~~ Malachi 4:1); or “shall be scraped off”, or “swept away”^{f52}, as the dust and dross of the earth, and the offscouring of all things.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 3

In this chapter, Wisdom, or Christ, delivers out some fresh lessons and instructions to his children; as not to forget his doctrine, but heartily attend to his precepts and ordinances, seeing these are the means of lengthening out their days, and of enjoying peace, (^{<A0B1>}Proverbs 3:1,2); as well as had the promise of the mercy and truth of God, and the continuance of them, annexed to them; and therefore are exhorted to keep close to them, and show the greatest value and affection for them, which was the way to find favour with, and to be taken notice of by, God and man, (^{<A0B2>}Proverbs 3:3,4); and then he proceeds to exhort them to a hearty trust in the Lord, without dependence on themselves; and to seek direction from him in every step they took, which they might expect to have, (^{<A0B3>}Proverbs 3:5,6); to humility and the fear of God, and fleeing from evil, which they would find would much contribute to their health, (^{<A0B4>}Proverbs 3:7,8); to liberality in supporting the worship of God, and the interest of religion, which would turn to account and profit to them, (^{<A0B5>}Proverbs 3:9,10); to patience in bearing the chastisement of the Lord, as coming from a loving father, (^{<A0B6>}Proverbs 3:11,12); then follows a commendation of wisdom, and the happiness of the man possessed of it is declared, (^{<A0B7>}Proverbs 3:13); from the profit, preciousness, pleasure, and usefulness of it, (^{<A0B8>}Proverbs 3:14-18); and from its concern in the works of creation and providence, (^{<A0B9>}Proverbs 3:19,20); and from that comfort, honour, safety, and security, which come by the doctrines and instructions of Wisdom, and a steady regard to them, (^{<A0B10>}Proverbs 3:21-26); and the chapter is concluded with exhortations to beneficence, charity, concord, and peace with neighbours, (^{<A0B11>}Proverbs 3:27-30); and to shun the ways of wicked men, urged from the different state and condition of wicked men and fools, and of the just, the lowly, and wise, (^{<A0B12>}Proverbs 3:31-35).

Ver. 1. *My son, forget not my law*, etc.] Or, “doctrine”^{f53}; the doctrine of Christ, the Gospel, and the several truths of it; which, being of the utmost moment and importance, should be kept in memory, and not let slip, or be in the least slighted and neglected; see (^{<A0B13>}Hebrews 2:1-3);

but let thine heart keep my commandments; as the ark, or chest, kept the two tables of the law put into it; it denotes a cordial affection for the commandments and ordinances of Christ, a hearty attention and obedience to them, and a constant and cheerful observance of them, flowing from love and gratitude to him, (^{<B445>}John 14:15,21).

Ver. 2. *For length of days, and long life*, etc.] Or, “years of life”, or “lives”^{f54}; a long life of usefulness and comfort here, and eternal life hereafter: the law of Moses promised a long life to the observers of it; but the Gospel of Christ brings an immortal life to light and promises to all believers in him that they shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. “Length of days for ever and ever” was asked by Christ of his Father, (^{<A2104>}Psalms 21:4), and given him, and is in his right hand, (^{<A1816>}Proverbs 3:16); it is in his power to give, and he does give it to all his children, people, and followers, (^{<A2104>}Psalms 21:4 ^{<B17D>}John 17:2);

and peace shall they add to thee; the Gospel is the Gospel of peace, which not only proclaims peace by the blood of Christ; but the doctrines of it, such as justification by the righteousness of Christ, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, are the means of giving and increasing spiritual peace in the hearts of believers; and so are the ordinances of Christ, which in (^{<A1817>}Proverbs 3:17); are called, for that reason, “paths of peace”; (see ^{<B101>}Romans 5:1,11 ^{<B916>}Psalms 119:165).

Ver. 3. *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee*, etc.] Or, forsake not them, and the exercise of them; show “mercy” to fellow creatures, to sinful men, to the bodies of men, by relieving their wants; and to their souls, by pitying and praying for them, and by giving them wholesome counsel and advice: to fellow Christians, sympathize with them in their troubles, put on bowels of compassion, be tenderhearted, and forgive offences; and, in a spirit of meekness, restore backsliders, for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice. Attend to “truth”; exercise faith on the Lord; cast not away your confidence; speak truth to your neighbour and brother; and hold fast the truth of the Gospel, and never depart from it. Though many interpreters understand this by way of promise, and as an encouragement to regard the doctrines and ordinances of Christ, rendering the words, “mercy and truth shall not forsake thee”^{f55}; meaning the mercy and truth of God; the “mercy” of God in forgiving sin, in sympathizing under affliction, in helping in time of need, in supplying with all needful grace, and in bringing to eternal life; for the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that

fear him, (^{<A317>}Psalm 103:17); the “truth” of God, his faithfulness in performing promises, never fails; the unbelief of man cannot make it of no effect; though we believe not, he abides faithful and true to every word of his; not one shall fail, or pass away; all shall be fulfilled; (see ^{<A883>}Psalm 89:33 ^{<A883>}Romans 3:3,4 ^{<A883>}2 Timothy 2:13); “all [his] paths [are] mercy and truth”, and he never goes out of them, (^{<A250>}Psalm 25:10);

bind them about thy neck; as chains for ornament: not mercy and truth, just before mentioned, as may seem at first sight; but the law and commandments of wisdom, (^{<A101>}Proverbs 3:1); or the doctrines and ordinances of Christ; (see ^{<A108>}Proverbs 1:8,9); reckon it as your greatest honour, glory, and beauty, that you steadfastly adhere to these things; nothing makes a believer look more lovely in conversation than a close regard to the truths of Christ, and a constant walking in his ordinances;

write them upon the table of thine heart; do not forget them, keep them in memory, and always retain a hearty affection for them; it is the Spirit’s work to write them in the heart; and when they are there written, it is the work of saints, under a divine influence, to copy them over in life, and to show by their conduct and behaviour that they are written there; (see ^{<A883>}Jeremiah 31:33 ^{<A883>}2 Corinthians 3:3). The allusion, in both phrases, is to the directions given about the law of Moses, (^{<A883>}Deuteronomy 6:8, 9); and to the writing of his law on tables of stone: and it was usual with the ancients, in later times, to write on tables of wood; Solon’s laws were written on tables of wood^{f56}; and such were the “tabellae et pugillares” of the Romans, made of box, beech, and other sorts of wood, covered with wax, on which they wrote; (see Gill on “^{<A883>}Habakkuk 2:2”); but Solomon would have his law written on the fleshly tables of the heart, (^{<A883>}2 Corinthians 3:3).

Ver. 4. *So shall thou find favour*, etc.] Or “grace”^{f57}; the grace of God, and larger measures of it; as Noah did, (^{<A883>}Genesis 6:8); which are communicated to men when in the way of their duty: or good will, esteem, and respect, among men; as Joseph had with Potiphar, and the keeper of the prison, (^{<A883>}Genesis 39:4,21);

and good understanding in the sight of God and man; as Christ, as man, had in the sight of both, (^{<A105>}Luke 2:52); that is, to be taken notice of, regarded, and approved by both. Some render it “good success”^{f58}; prosperity in things temporal and spiritual; (see ^{<A883>}Psalm 111:10). There is something lovely, and of good report, in a close attention to the doctrines

and duties of religion; which make a man amiable in the sight of others, and which is followed with a blessing from the Lord.

Ver. 5. *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart*, etc.] Not in a creature, the best, the holiest, and the highest; not in any creature enjoyment, as riches, strength, and wisdom; nor in any outward privilege, arising from natural descent and education; not in a man's self, in his own heart, which is deceitful; nor in any works of righteousness done by him; not in a profession of religion, or the duties of it, ever so well performed; not in frames, nor in graces, and the exercise of them; no, not in faith or trust itself: but in the Lord, the object of all grace, and in him only; in Jehovah the Father, as the God of nature and providence, for all temporal blessings; and as the God of all grace, for all spiritual blessings, and all the needful supplies of grace; and for eternal happiness, which he has provided, promised, and freely gives. Trust in him at all times; in times of affliction, temptation, and darkness: there is a great deal of reason for it; all power and strength are in him to help; his love, grace, and mercy, move him to it, and are always the same: the consideration of what he has done for others that have trusted in him, and for ourselves in times past, should induce and encourage to it; as also the happiness of those that trust in him, who enjoy peace and safety; and his displeasure at those that show any diffidence of him, or distrust him. Trust in Jehovah the Son; in his person for acceptance; in his righteousness for justification; in his blood for pardon; in his fulness for supply; in his power for protection and preservation; and in him alone for salvation and eternal life. Trust in Jehovah the Spirit, to carry on and finish the work of grace upon the heart; of which a saint may be confident that where it is begun it will be completed. And this trust in Father, Son, and Spirit, should be "with all the heart", cordial and sincere. The phrase denotes not so much the strength of faith as the sincerity of it; it signifies a faith unfeigned; it is not saying, or professing, that a man believes and trusts in the Lord; but it is with the heart, and with his whole heart, that he believes unto righteousness, if he believes aright; (see <5100>Romans 10:10 <4857>Acts 8:37);

and lean not unto thine own understanding; or trust not to that; for it stands opposed to trusting in the Lord. Men should not depend upon their own wisdom and understanding, in the conduct of civil life, but should seek the direction and blessing of Providence, or otherwise will meet with disappointment; and, when they succeed, should ascribe it not to their own prudence and wisdom, but to the goodness of God; for "bread" is not

always “to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding”, (²⁰¹¹Ecclesiastes 9:11); and much less should men lean to their own understanding in matters of religion; a natural man has no understanding of spiritual things, of the things of the Gospel, nor indeed any practical understanding of things moral, (⁸¹¹Romans 3:11 ⁴¹⁴1 Corinthians 2:14) (²⁰²Jeremiah 4:22). The understanding of man is darkened by sin; yea, is darkness itself; it is like the first earth, covered with darkness, till light is let into it, and therefore not to be leaned unto and depended on, (⁴⁰⁸Ephesians 4:18 5:8). There is a necessity of a new heart and spirit, of an understanding to be given, in order to understand spiritual and divine things, (²³⁶Ezekiel 36:26 ⁶¹¹1 John 5:20); for though these are not contrary to the reason and understanding of men; yet they are above them, and cannot be discovered, reached, comprehended, and accounted for by them, (⁴⁶⁷Matthew 16:17 ⁸¹¹John 3:4,9). Nay, there are some things in the Gospel, which, though plain to an enlightened understanding by the word of God, yet the manner how they are cannot be apprehended: as the doctrines of a trinity of Persons; of the generation of the Son of God; the procession of the Spirit; the union of the two natures in Christ; the resurrection of the dead, etc. In short, not our reason and understanding at best, and much less as carnal and unsanctified, but the word of God only is our rule of judgment, and the standard of our faith and practice; and to that we should have recourse and be directed by it, and not lean to our own understandings.

Ver. 6. *In all thy ways acknowledge him*, etc.] Or “know him”^{f59}; the Lord: set him before thee; have him always in view; consider him as ever present with thee, observing every step thou takest; and take not one step without his leave, and without his advice; ask wisdom of him who gives liberally; consult his word, and make the Scriptures thy counsellors, or the men of thy counsel, as in (¹¹¹Psalm 119:24); take him as your guide; observe the footsteps of his providence; follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes; walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; when things go cross and adverse, and not to your mind, submit to his sovereignty; and be still and know that he is God, that does all things right, for his own glory and his people’s good, (¹⁶¹⁰Psalm 46:10); and when things succeed, give him the glory of all; own his hand in it, and the bounty of it; acknowledge that all you have, in providence and grace, come from him;

and he shall direct thy paths; man cannot direct his own; no, not a man: this is a blessing from the Lord; who steps of his people, keeps the feet of

his saints, and directs them aright in things temporal and spiritual, (^{<24123>}Jeremiah 10:23 ^{<18723>}Psalms 37:23 ^{<9119>}1 Samuel 2:9).

Ver. 7. *Be not wise in thine own eyes*, etc.] So as to act independently of God; not to trust in him, nor acknowledge him, nor seek to him for help and direction; nor ask nor take the advice of others; but, being conceited and self-sufficient, lean to thine own understanding, as being wise enough to conduct all affairs in life by thy own discretion; and in matters of religion wiser than thy teachers, and even than the Scriptures, being wise above that which is written; pleasing thyself with thine own wisdom, as exceeding others; glorying in it as thine own acquisition, and not ascribing it to God, so far as it any ways deserves the name of wisdom; though for the most part that which men glory in, and are conceited of, is not wisdom, but folly; and at least it is their folly to boast of it and be elated with it; (see ^{<23121>}Isaiah 5:21) (^{<45216>}Romans 12:16);

fear the Lord; which is true wisdom; and, where this is not, there is none, let men be ever so conceited; and where this is there is humility; these two go together, and make a man wise, rich, and honourable, (^{<21214>}Proverbs 22:4). The fear of the Lord is opposed to pride, high-mindedness, and vain conceit, (^{<45120>}Romans 11:20); this includes reverence of God, faith in him, dependence on him, acknowledgment of him, seeking to him for direction, and carefulness not to offend him;

and depart from evil; from the evil of self-confidence and self-conceit, and from all other evil; the fear of God influences men to avoid sin, and abstain from all appearance of it; by means and through the exercise of it men forsake it, and keep at a distance from it, (^{<21166>}Proverbs 16:6). Nehemiah could not do as others did, because of the fear of the Lord; and Job was a man that feared God, and therefore he avoided that which was evil, (^{<14515>}Nehemiah 5:15 ^{<18101>}Job 1:1).

Ver. 8. *It shall be health to thy navel*, etc.] That part of the body which is the knot of the intestines; and may be put for the bowels and inward parts, which being sound, the body is in health; and these may be put for the whole body: and so the Septuagint version renders it, “to thy body”; and this may be put for the whole person. And the sense is, either wisdom, as Jarchi; the doctrine of wisdom, the Gospel; which teaches men to trust in the Lord, and not in themselves, to apply to him for wisdom, and not lean to their own understanding; this contributes much to a man’s spiritual health and welfare: or else the fear of the Lord is of this use to men, both in

soul and body; since by it they depart from those sins which bring diseases upon the body; and are influenced by it to the exercise of such graces, and the discharge of such duties, as are the means of keeping the soul in good plight;

and marrow to thy bones; or, “watering”^{f60} to them: that which irrigates and moistens them, and makes and keeps them strong and solid: (see ~~<4824>~~ Job 21:24). What marrow is to the bones, that is wisdom, or the fear of God, to the souls of men; the means of establishing and strengthening them against sin, and snares and temptations, and to do the will and work of God.

Ver. 9. *Honour the Lord with thy substance*, etc.] Or, “out of thy substance”^{f61}; for as it should be a man’s own that he gives, and not another’s, and therefore called “thy substance”; or, as the Septuagint version, “out of thy just labours”, what is righteously and lawfully gotten, and not by fraud and oppression; so it is only a part of it, and not all, that is required; what in proportion to his substance can be prudently spared, and is sufficient and suitable to the call in Providence. A man’s “substance” are his wealth and riches; his “mammon”, as the Targum; which, in comparison of heavenly things, indeed have no substance in them: yet these are worldly substance, and of account; and as with these God has honoured men, they should honour him with them again, by giving to the poor, especially his poor saints; for as an oppressing of them is a reproaching of him, so having mercy on them is honouring him, (~~<2048>~~ Proverbs 14:31); and especially by contributing to the support of his worship, the keeping up the interest and credit of religion, and for the spread of the Gospel; and chiefly by communicating to the ministers of it, giving them the “double honour” which is due to them, and which, when given them, the Lord takes as done to himself, as an honouring him, (~~<5457>~~ 1 Timothy 5:17);

and with the firstfruits of all thine increase; or, “out of the chief of all thine increase”^{f62}; God must have the best, and in the first place. The allusion is either to the maintenance of the priests and Levites under the law, and the manner of doing it; which, among other things, was out of the annual produce of the earth, and the firstfruits of it; and may respect the comfortable support of Gospel ministers under the present dispensation; (see ~~<4193>~~ 1 Corinthians 9:13,14); or to the firstfruits of every kind offered to the Lord, and to the feast kept sacred to him at the ingathering the fruits of the earth, (~~<0230>~~ Leviticus 23:10,17,39); and even among the Heathens

formerly were something of the same kind. Aristotle says^{f63} the ancient sacrifices and assemblies were instituted as firstfruits, after the gathering of the fruits, at which time especially they ceased from working.

Ver. 10. *So shall thy barns be filled with plenty*, etc.] With plenty of corn; so that there will be a sufficient provision of bread for the eater for the ensuing year, and of seed for the sower when the time of sowing returns; so far should they be, it suggests, from being losers by honouring the Lord with their substance, that they should be gainers by it; instead of having less, should have abundantly more;

and thy presses shall burst out with new wine; not that they should really burst^{f64} for then the wine would be spilled, which would be a loss; but that they should be so full, that they should be ready to burst or run over: and so the Targum, and the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, “and thy presses shall overflow with new wine”. As the former clause denotes plenty of eatables, so this of drinkables; and both fulness of all sorts of provisions, promised to the liberal man; and may be an emblem of the large provisions of grace and glory, which the Lord has made for and bestows upon such that honour him.

messes”.

Ver. 11. *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord*, etc.] This seems to be introduced to prevent an objection that may be made to the above promise of plenty; seeing the children of God are often afflicted in this world; even the wise and pious, and those that fear the Lord, and honour him; which is accounted for, and the reason of it given, in (³¹⁸²Proverbs 3:12). These words are cited in (³⁸²⁵Hebrews 12:5,6), and are represented as an exhortation, spoken unto children, the children of God; by which it appears, that not any single person is meant by “my son”; and, as not here, so neither elsewhere in this book, where the same phrase is used. It is not to be limited to any son of Solomon’s according to the flesh; nor to any person or persons, that applied to him for instruction, and were taught by him; nor to all the people of God in his time: but it has respect to the Jews in the times of the apostles; and even to all the children of God in all ages, who more or less endure afflictions, here called “the chastening of the Lord”, because they are from him; whatever concern men or devils, or second causes, may have in them, they are originally from the Lord, either sent or suffered by him; they are indeed by his appointment, and are ordered, limited, and restrained by him, and are overruled for his glory and

his people's good: they are not chastisements in a way of vindictive wrath and justice, which would be contrary to the satisfaction of Christ, the justice of God, his everlasting and unchangeable love, and to his word and oath; but they are in love; they are the chastisements of a father, in which he deals with them as with children; and uses them for the good discipline and instruction of them, as the word ^{f65} here signifies; and therefore not to be "despised", or loathed and abhorred, as disagreeable food or physic be; or as if they were unnecessary and unprofitable, or unworthy of notice and regard; or as little, slight, and trifling things, without considering from whence they come and for what they are sent; but, on the contrary, should be regarded as useful and serviceable; (see ~~<RB7>~~ Job 5:17);

neither be weary of his correction; "rebuke" or "reproof"^{f66}; so in (~~<SB5>~~ Hebrews 12:5); "when thou art rebuked of him", not in wrath and fury, but in love, as before. The same thing is meant by correction as chastening; and supposes a fault to be committed by him that is corrected, for God corrects none but for sin; and authority in the corrector, which he, as the Father of spirits, and as our covenant God and Father in Christ, has a right to do: he corrects by his Spirit, by his word, by his ministers, and by his providences, afflictive ones, which last is here meant; and it is always for good, at a proper time, and when necessary, in measure and with judgment: and of this the children should not be "weary", as grievous and intolerable; and especially should not be weary of their lives on account of it, in which sense the word is used in (~~<SB4>~~ Genesis 27:46) which has been the case of Job and others; but should bear it quietly and peaceably, and with patience, without fretting and murmuring; or should not "faint", as it is rendered in (~~<SB5>~~ Hebrews 12:5); or sink under the weight, but cheerfully support under it. The two extremes, which men are apt to run into, are here guarded against; on the one hand, to make little or nothing of an affliction; to outbrave it, not to be affected with it, nor humble under the mighty hand of God; nor consider the rod, and him that has appointed it: and, on the other hand, to aggravate an affliction, as if no sorrow was like theirs, and to be quite dejected and overwhelmed with it.

Ver. 12. *For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth*, etc.] This is a reason why the children of God should not despise corrections, nor be weary of them; since they spring from love, are given in love, nor is there any abatement of it in them: when the Lord chastens and corrects, he does not take away his lovingkindness from them; yea, it is because he loves them

that therefore he thus deals with them; wherefore they ought to be patiently bore, and kindly taken by them;

even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth; as a father chastens and corrects his son, whom he dearly loves, and has the greatest pleasure in, so the Lord chastens and corrects his people; (see ^{<4885>}Deuteronomy 8:5). There is such a relation subsisting between them as that of father and son, which flows from the inexpressible love of God to them; and which is a love of complacency and delight in them, and is invariable and unchangeable, and continues the same under all their afflictions; as appears by what he does for them in them, and by the issue of them; he knows their souls in adversity, and chooses them in the furnace of affliction; he pays love visits to them, and comforts them under all their tribulation; he sympathizes with them, and supports them; he makes their bed in their affliction, and delivers out of it, or takes them to himself: the issue is always his own glory, and their good.

Ver. 13. *Happy [is] the man [that] findeth wisdom*, etc.] Some connect these words with the preceding; as if the sense was, a good man, though he is chastened by the Lord, yet is a happy man; not only because his chastenings are in love and for good, but because he improves in spiritual knowledge and understanding by them; (see ^{<4942>}Psalms 94:12). Aben Ezra connects them with the former, but in a different manner, thus; “happy is the man that findeth wisdom”, for by it he keeps from sinning, that chastisements may not come upon him. But rather the argument in praise of wisdom, and the advantages of it, insisted on in the preceding chapter, is resumed here and enlarged upon; and by wisdom is meant Christ, and a saving knowledge of him by means of his Gospel; and “finding” him supposes seeking him; which does not arise from nature, but the grace of God, and follows upon the sight of the need and worth of Christ; and is done in the use of means, as reading, praying, and attendance on the word and ordinances: and finding him is no other than an enjoyment of him by faith; which is a seeing him, a taking hold on him, and possessing him; who is to be found in the covenant of grace, being the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it; in the Gospel, which is full of him; in the promises of it, which hold him forth, and the blessings of his grace; in the ordinances, which direct unto him, and where he shows himself: for he is not to be found by the light of nature, nor by carnal reason, nor by the law of Moses; but by means of the Gospel, attended with the Spirit of wisdom and

revelation in the knowledge of him; and a happy finding this, which fills the possessor with inexpressible joy! (see ^{<B04>}John 1:41);

and the man [that] getteth understanding; Christ, and a spiritual understanding of him: this is not a proper acquisition of a man's own; an interest in Christ is not gotten by anything of man's; not by his good works, which are the fruits of grace; nor by faith and repentance, which are gifts of grace themselves; but it is given unto a man: and "getting" here signifies, as before, possession and enjoyment of Christ, as God's pure gift; as a man that is said to obtain the favour of God, when he enjoys it, and the effects of it, in consequence of finding Christ, (^{<B05>}Proverbs 8:35); where the same word is used as here. The word signifies to "draw out"^{f67}; as metals are drawn out of the earth by searching and digging for, or as water out of a well; thus Christ, and the knowledge of him, are drawn out of the mines and fountains of the Scriptures, by such that seek after him aright. Aben Ezra interprets it, that draws or brings it out from another, and learns it; the true believer in Christ hears and learns of the Father, and so comes to Christ, and enjoys him, (^{<B65>}John 6:45). The Targum is,

"who causes understanding to spring up;"

as water out of a well or fountain; out of his heart, as Gersom; or, as Jarchi, who has learned wisdom, that it is ready to break out, at his mouth; out of the abundance of it in his heart, his mouth speaketh; as such that know Christ cannot but speak to others of the things they have heard and seen, (^{<B23>}Matthew 12:34,35 ^{<B00>}Acts 4:20).

Ver. 14. *For the merchandise of it [is] better than the merchandise of silver*, etc.] The believer is a spiritual merchant; faith is a trading with and for Christ, and for spiritual and heavenly things by him; and because there is a parting with something for Christ, as a man's sinful lusts and pleasures, his own righteousness, his friends and relations, when set in opposition to or competition with him, and even life itself, when called for; and because he runs a risk of suffering reproach, afflictions, and death itself; therefore this concern with him, and enjoyment of him, is called a "merchandise", which is "better than [that] of silver", or than silver which is got by merchandise: for Christ, and the things of Christ, are more valuable than silver, and to be preferred unto it; more useful and profitable than silver is, which a man may have a large abundance of, and lose his soul, whereas by Christ is the salvation of it; more satisfying than silver is, with which a man is never satisfied, whereas he that has Christ has enough, having all things;

more pleasant in obtaining, and more safe in enjoying; a great deal of anxiety and vexation attend the one, and inexpressible pleasure the other; and more durable and lasting than that, the enjoyment of Christ is for ever;

and the gain thereof than fine gold; the doctrines and ordinances of Christ are more to be desired than gold, yea, than fine gold; the blessings of grace by Christ, such as redemption, pardon of sin, etc. are not obtained by corruptible things, as silver and gold, but are more precious than they; and even the graces of Christ in the hearts of his people, as faith, hope, and love, are more precious than gold that perisheth; and much more preferable must he himself be, and the gain that accrues to a believer by him, which is cent per cent an hundred fold, even in this world, and in the world to come everlasting life: it is all clear gain a believer gets by Christ and trading with him; he has him, and all with him, without money and without price; he has that which is more worth than the gain of the whole world, even the salvation of his immortal soul; the riches he has by Christ are immense and unsearchable, the riches of grace and glory; it cannot be said how great this gain is.

Ver. 15. *She [is] more precious than rubies*, etc.] Or “pearls”^{f68}, as some; which were formerly esteemed above all precious stones; the eastern were the more valuable^{f69}, which Solomon had most knowledge of; Christ is the pearl of great price, of more value than any pearl, or all put together, (⁽⁴¹³⁶⁾Matthew 13:46); (see Gill on “~~(43218)~~ Job 28:18”); or “carbuncles”^{f70}, as others. The Targum and Septuagint render it in general terms “precious stones”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “than all riches”; there is a beautiful gradation in this and (⁽⁴¹⁸¹⁴⁾Proverbs 3:14), wisdom is first preferred to silver, then to “fine gold”^{f71}, and here, to “precious stones” Christ is precious, exceeding precious in his names and titles, Messiah, Jesus, Immanuel, etc. in his divine nature, and the perfections of it, which show his condescension and grace to become a Saviour, assure of his ability to save, and render his mediatorial performances valuable; in his person as God and man; in the beauty, fulness, and fitness of it; in his power, wisdom, grace, etc. in his offices, his priestly office; in his satisfaction, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, are precious; in his intercession, which is ever acceptable and prevalent; in his prophetic office, his Gospel is precious, every truth and promise of it; in his kingly office, all his ordinances and appointments, his commandments are more to be loved than gold, yea, than fine gold; in all his relations and characters, and in everything that belongs to him; he is so to them that believe, and to none else; (⁽⁴¹¹¹⁷⁾1 Peter 2:7);

these see the need and worth of him, receive much from him, and live upon him; and especially he is precious to them at first conversion; and so he is after desertions, and long absence; and under temptations and afflictions, losses and disappointments; and in the hour of death: and he is superlatively precious, “more precious than rubies”, or any precious stones; of a superior lustre and glory to them, being “the brightness of his Father’s glory”; and of more intrinsic worth and value, of greater price than any pearls, and more enriching to his possessors, for such possess all things;

and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her; this takes in a very great compass: there are many things that are very desirable, and the desires of man’s heart are very extensive, and not easily satisfied; there are the precious things of heaven, brought forth by the sun and moon; and the precious things of the earth, which are either upon it or in it, in the bowels of it, and upon the plains, and hills; but none of equal worth with Christ; there are many precious and excellent, and desirable persons in the world, neighbours, friends, relations, and acquaintance; saints on earth, and angels in heaven; yet none to be valued with Christ, and compared to him; (see ^{<4935>}Psalm 73:25).

Ver. 16. *Length of days [is] in her right hand*, etc.] Wisdom is here represented as a queen, as indeed she is above all kings and queens; (see ^{<4185>}Proverbs 8:15,16,18); holding in one hand, instead of a sceptre, “length of days”; and in the other, instead of a globe, riches and honour: the allusion is thought by some on this clause to be to an ancient custom of numbering things, and the ages of men, by the hand and fingers, beginning with the left hand, and when they came to a hundred went to the right^{f72}; so that in that might be truly said to be “length of days”, few arriving to that number: or rather the reference is to what Solomon received of the Lord, who, asking wisdom, had not that only, but a long life, and riches and honour; see (^{<4181>}1 Kings 3:11-14). Some think that only temporal blessings are here meant, and, because health and long life are preferable to wealth and honour, the former are said to be in the right hand, and the latter in the left; but seeing in the preceding verses the advantages of wisdom are superior to silver, gold, and precious stones, it can hardly be thought that she should be represented as only having temporal blessings in her hands to bestow on her followers. Others are of opinion that spiritual and eternal blessings are the right hand ones, being the principal; and temporal blessings are the left hand ones, as being the less valuable, (^{<4163>}Matthew 6:33); but to me they seem all of one sort, all spiritual and eternal ones,

even those of the left hand, by comparing this passage with (²¹⁸⁸Proverbs 8:18). By “length of days” is meant “length of days for ever and ever”, (²²⁰⁴Psalms 21:4); or eternal life, a life of vision or enjoyment of God; a life of perfect knowledge, holiness, and pleasure; being free from all the imperfections, difficulties, and distresses of the present one, and which will last for ever; this is in the hand of Christ, not the promise and grant of it only, but the thing itself, in consequence of his asking it of his Father: and which he has in a covenant way, and so has a right and power to bestow it: and it being in his hands shows both the valuableness and the security and safety of it; and also that it is to be had from him, and is in his gift, and in no other; and is a pure gift of his grace; wherefore happy is the man that finds Wisdom, or Christ, since he finds and has eternal life in him;

[and] in her left hand riches and honour; by “riches” are meant not temporal riches, for these are not always to the wise, nor to the children of Wisdom, nor of Christ; and all that have these are not happy, nor are they durable: but spiritual riches are intended, the riches of grace; of pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying grace, and of all supplies of grace; and also the riches of glory, which are solid and satisfying, immense and unsearchable, lasting and durable: and by “honour” is designed not the honour which comes from men, or the honour of this world; for such who find Christ, and are possessed of him, and profess him, have but a small share of this, being, generally speaking, accounted the faith and offscouring of the world; but yet they are the children of God, and so have that name which is better than to be the sons and daughters of the greatest monarch; they are the spouse of Christ, and so his queen that stands at his right hand in gold of Ophir; they are made kings and priests unto God, and shall reign with Christ for evermore; this honour have all the saints, and is what is in the hands of Christ to give, and does give, to all that believe in him: or “glory”¹⁷³, as the word signifies; the glory of God, eternal glory; this as well as grace is Christ’s gift, (²⁸⁴¹Psalms 84:11).

Ver. 17. *Her ways [are] ways of pleasantness*, etc.] The “ways” and methods which Christ took to bring about the salvation of his people; some in eternity, as engaging as a surety for them, entering into a covenant with his father on their account, taking the care and charge of their persons, grace, and glory; others in time, as the assumption of their nature, obedience to the law, suffering and dying in their room and stead, rising again, ascending to heaven, and interceding for them; calling them by his grace, clothing them with his righteousness, and keeping them by his

power unto salvation, and at last introducing them into his kingdom and glory. These are “pleasant”, to view the love of Christ in them, the success that attended them, the glory of God brought about hereby, and the salvation of his people; which is exceedingly pleasant, being agreeable to all the perfections of God; suitable to the case of sinners, full and complete in itself, free to them, and of an everlasting duration; it is this which makes Christ so pleasant to souls, and the Gospel also: or else the ways which Christ has prescribed and directed his followers to walk in are here meant; as himself, who is the principal way, and the only way to the Father, and to heaven and happiness; also the ways of faith, holiness, and truth, the ways of Christ’s commandments, and all the ordinances of the Gospel and institutions of religion; which are “pleasant”, when the presence of God and Christ is enjoyed in them; when the heart is enlarged with the love of God and Christ; when assisted therein by the Spirit of God, having good food and refreshment in them, and good company with them; and which, though attended with much tribulation, end in eternal pleasure;

and all her paths [are] peace; the “paths” which Christ has trod in to procure the peace of his people; he appeared in the council of peace, and assisted in it; he entered into a covenant of peace with his Father; he assumed the nature of his people, in order to be their peacemaker; he took the chastisement of their peace upon him; he obtained it by the blood of his cross; he sends his ministers to publish it, and his Spirit into the hearts of men to reconcile them to this way of peace and salvation by him; and the result of all this is, that an honourable “peace” is made for sinners, and peace of conscience is enjoyed, which passeth all understanding, flowing from the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and the whole issues in eternal peace in the world to come. Likewise all those “paths” which Christ instructs his people to walk in; as the paths of faith and obedience, these lead to the enjoyment of “peace” here and hereafter; there is much peace had in a way of believing, and great peace have they which love the law of God, and the commandments of Christ, and obey them; they may meet with much uneasiness at times in their own spirits, by reason of sin, temptation, and desertion; they may bring the malice of the world upon them, and have much trouble from it, and too, too often, disagree among themselves; and yet, after all, they have that peace which others have not while they live; and, when they die, they depart in peace, and enter into eternal peace. Now all this is true, not of unregenerate persons, who desire

not the knowledge of Christ, and to whom there is no peace, but of true believers in him.

Ver. 18. *She [is] a tree of life*, etc.] Or “lives”^{f74}; so Christ is called, (^(~~Rev~~) Revelation 2:7 22:2,14); in allusion to the tree of life in the garden of Eden, (^(~~Gen~~) Genesis 2:9); he being the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; which souls may come at, and pluck and eat of the fruit which is upon him in great plenty and variety, even all the blessings of grace and glory;

to them that lay hold upon her; which is expressive of an act of faith on Christ, (^(~~Heb~~) Hebrews 6:18); faith lays hold on the person of Christ as a Saviour, and will have him and no other; it comes to the blood of Christ, and deals with it for pardon and purification; it lays hold on his skirt, who is a Jew, on the robe of his righteousness, and puts it on; it lays hold on his strength, and goes forth in it, in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; it lays hold on his covenant, the blessings and promises of it, and takes them to itself: and this act supposes danger without him, safety in him, a view of suitable provisions for food and clothing with him; some strength of grace, and some degree of resolution; also condescension on Christ’s part to suffer himself to be handled by them; and likewise that he first took hold on them and brought them out of a state of nature to himself: great encouragement there is for sensible sinners to lay hold on Christ; he is set before them in the Gospel to be laid hold on; he never discourages any from so doing, nor casts out any that come to him; he is able to bear the stress of their salvation they lay upon him; multitudes of lost sinners have been saved by him: and he is a tree of life, as the text says, to such persons; they have spiritual life, and the support and comfort of it, from him now, and may expect everlasting life from him hereafter;

and happy [is everyone] that retaineth her; or “holds her fast”^{f75}; (see ^(~~Sol~~) Song of Solomon 3:4 ^(~~Gen~~) Genesis 32:26); as such may be said to do who constantly apply to him for fresh communications of grace; who walk on in him as they have received him, and hold fast the profession of their faith in him. The phrase is expressive of great affection to him, and strong faith in him; faith keeps its hold of Christ through great darkness and many difficulties; oftentimes the soul walks in darkness, and yet stays itself on Christ, and, Abraham-like, believes in hope against hope. Faith is sometimes very low, and yet lets not go its hold; it fails not, through the prevalent intercession of Christ; it cannot so let go its hold as that there is a

parting; a partial departing there may be, but not a total one: however, it is sometimes very difficult for faith to keep fast hold of the Redeemer; it is for the honour and comfort of believers so to do; and it is their mercy that interest in Christ, and salvation by him, do not depend on acts of faith; for, though “we believe not, [yet] he abides faithful”, (^{<B213>}2 Timothy 2:13); nevertheless happy are they that retain him, or are steadfast in their faith on him; they have much communion with him now, and shall live with him for evermore hereafter. Michaelis; so Mercerus.

Ver. 19. *The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth*, etc.] He has created all things, and made the world by his Son, the Wisdom of God, (^{<B49>}Ephesians 3:9) (^{<B300>}Hebrews 1:2); not using him as an instrument; but, he being an efficient cause with him, to him, as to the first cause, the creation of all things is ascribed, (^{<B400>}John 1:1-3 ^{<B5016>}Colossians 1:16); and particularly the laying the foundation of the earth, (^{<B300>}Hebrews 1:10); and though this is true of the divine perfection of wisdom, (^{<B400>}Jeremiah 10:12); yet from the context it appears best to understand it of the essential Wisdom of God, Christ Jesus; the Jerusalem Targum of (^{<B400>}Genesis 1:1); is, “by wisdom God created”, etc. and this serves greatly to set forth the dignity and excellency of Wisdom, or Christ, and so the happiness of that man that finds him; with this the account of him is closed and crowned;

by understanding hath he established the heavens: or prepared, adorned, and beautified them, by placing the luminaries in them, and directing their station, motion, and influence; the making of the heavens, with all the host of them, is ascribed to the essential Word or Wisdom of God, (^{<B493>}Psalms 33:6).

Ver. 20. *By his knowledge the depths are broken up*, etc.] From whence fountains and rivers flow, and whereby that great cavity was made which holds that large confluence of waters called the sea, (^{<B400>}Genesis 1:9,10). Some refer this to the breaking up the fountains of the great deep at the flood, (^{<B4071>}Genesis 7:11); and others to the dividing of the waters of the Red sea when Israel came out of Egypt, (^{<B4983>}Psalms 78:13); all wonderful works of divine wisdom, and show the greatness of him, in whom are “hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”, (^{<B5016>}Colossians 2:3), by whom they were done;

and the clouds drop down the dew; which makes the earth fruitful, and is put for all the blessings of nature, (^{<B4278>}Genesis 27:28); the drops of dew are begotten by the Lord, they have no other father but him; the vanities of the

Gentiles cannot produce them; he who fills the clouds with them, from whence they descend, is no other than the mighty God; and such is Christ the Wisdom of God. Some understand this in a mystical sense of Gospel ministers, and of the dew of Gospel doctrine, dropped and distilled by them under the influence and direction of Christ; see (^{<631>}Deuteronomy 32:2); but the literal sense is best.

Ver. 21. *My son, let not them depart from thine eyes*, etc.] Meaning not the things done by Wisdom; though it is good to contemplate his works of creation and providence, which serve to set forth the glory of Christ, and lead into adoring and admiring views of him, and to thankfulness to him; but wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, whereby these things are done, which are but so many names of Christ: we should always set him before us, keep him always in view, be ever looking to him by faith, and never suffer him to depart from our eyes; we should always have in sight his divine Person for our acceptance with God, the greatness and glory of it to encourage our faith and hope in him; we should keep in view his righteousness for our justification, and which we should ever make mention of at the throne of grace, and hold it forth in the hand of faith against all charges and accusations of law and justice, Satan, or our own hearts; we should be continually looking to his blood for peace and pardon, healing and cleansing; and our eyes should be at all times on his fulness, for fresh supplies of grace, for spiritual food, or the daily bread of our souls, and for spiritual strength and comfort; we should always consider him as the Saviour, and be exercising faith on him as such, for there is no other; and should always look upon him as the Mediator between God and man, and make use of him; and he should be ever before us as our example, both in the exercise of grace and performance of duty, to copy after; and we should always keep sight of him while running our Christian race, as the forerunner for us entered, and as the mark for the prize of the high calling of God. And not only Wisdom, or Christ, but all the things that are said of him in the context, we should never lose sight of; the exceeding great gain got by him, the superlative preciousness of him, the fulness of blessings in both his hands, the pleasantness and peaceableness of his ways, the usefulness of him as a tree of life to those that lay hold upon him and retain him, and the works of nature and providence done by him, (^{<3184>}Proverbs 3:14-20). Moreover, this may include all the truths and doctrines of Wisdom, or Christ; for, if the law and its precepts were to be upon the hands and as frontlets between the eyes of the Israelites, and so be ever in

sight, then much more the doctrines of the Gospel, (^{<1818>}Deuteronomy 6:8,9). It is observable that the Septuagint here makes use of the same word the apostle does in (^{<811>}Hebrews 2:1); speaking of Gospel truths; (see Gill on "^{<811>}Hebrews 2:1"); these are meant in the next clause; and some by a transposition place them thus, "let not sound wisdom and discretion depart from thine eyes, keep" them; for by

sound wisdom is meant sound doctrine, the wholesome words of Christ, the solid and substantial truths of the Gospel. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "keep the law"; but the Syriac version, much better, "keep my doctrine", the doctrine of the Gospel; which also is meant by

discretion, or "counsel"¹⁷⁶, as some render the word, and as the Gospel is called, (^{<402>}Acts 20:27); this should be kept; the doctrines of it should be held fast and not let go, or be departed from; and the ordinances of it should be observed and kept, as they were delivered, from a principle of love, and a view to the glory of Christ; the advantages arising from them follow.

Ver. 22. *So shall they be life unto thy soul*, etc.] Give it a better life than it naturally has, though immortal; Christ is both the spiritual and eternal life of the souls of those that look unto him by faith; and his Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are the means of reviving drooping saints, and of quickening them to the discharge of their duty; wherefore both he and they should be kept in continual view, and held fast;

and grace to thy neck; an ornament to that and to the whole man; how ornamental is Christ and his righteousness to a believer! how lovely is the person that is steady in his principles, and regular in his practices! who stands fast in the truths of the Gospel, and whose conversation is as becomes it! (see ^{<300>}Proverbs 1:9 3:3).

Ver. 23. *Then shall thou walk in thy way safely*, etc.] In the way of thy duty and business, without fear of any enemy; having in sight the Captain of salvation gone before, and walking in such ways of pleasantness and peace as Wisdom's are; and having such a lamp to the feet, and such a light unto the paths, as the Gospel and its doctrines be;

and thy foot shall not stumble; at the word and the truths of it, as some men do, being thereunto appointed; and at Christ, the stumbling stone laid in Zion, particularly at his justifying righteousness; see (^{<1018>}1 Peter 2:8 ^{<803>}Romans 9:33).

Ver. 24. *When thou liest down thou shalt not be afraid*, etc.] That is, when thou liest down on thy bed at night in order to take sleep, having committed thyself into the hands of a faithful Creator and covenant God and Father, and of Christ the Redeemer and Wisdom of God; thou shalt not be afraid of thieves breaking in to hurt thy person or rob thee of thy property, or of fire to consume thy dwelling and substance, and of nocturnal apparitions and diabolical spectres deceiving thy sight and disturbing thy mind: or when thou art “asleep”^{f77}, for so the word also signifies; thou shalt not be surprised out of it with any of the above things, or terrified in it with uneasy imaginations, anxious cares, and distressing dreams;

yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet; free of all uneasy thoughts and cares, sound and refreshing, pleasant and comfortable, like that of the labouring man, (^{<2052>}Ecclesiastes 5:12); (see ^{<5908>}Psalm 4:8). This epithet of “sweet” is often given to “sleep” in poetic writings^{f78}.

Ver. 25. *Be not afraid of sudden fear*, etc.] Of anything terrible that comes unawares, unthought of, by any of the above things mentioned in the preceding note; or by any rumours and reports of danger being near at hand; always think thyself safe in the arms of Wisdom, and under the care of Israel’s keeper, who neither slumbers nor sleeps;

neither of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh; either of the desolation which wicked men threaten to bring, and are suffered to bring, upon the godly for the sake of religion; either on their persons or goods, since suffering at their hands in such a cause is to the honour of saints, and for the glory of God; or of the desolation which comes upon the godly, for God is able to deliver him from it, as Noah and his family from the universal deluge, and Lot and his family from Sodom and Gomorrah; or if they promiscuously fall in it, nevertheless it will be well with them to all eternity.

Ver. 26. *For the Lord shall be thy confidence*, etc.] The object of it, in whom thou shall put thy confidence, and be safe and secure from all fear and danger: or “the Lord shall be in thy confidence”^{f79}; shall support thee in it, and maintain that, so that thou shalt not cast it away; the word used has sometimes the notion off oily in it, and Jarchi, from the Jerusalem Talmud, produces a sense agreeable to it;

“the Lord shall be in things in which thou art foolish;”

which, how absurd it may seem to be, will admit of a good interpretation; that the Lord will be with Wisdom's followers in things which may seem foolishness to the world; as Christ, the things of Christ, and the things of the Spirit of Christ, the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are. The Targum is,

“the Lord shall be thine help,”

in all times of distress, difficulty, and danger;

and shall keep thy foot from being taken; in the snares of sin, temptation, and mischief; in those which Satan and the world lay for God's people; from these the Lord preserves them; wherefore happy are those that have an interest in Christ, who find and enjoy him.

Ver. 27. *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due*, etc.] Honour, reverence, and tribute, to civil magistrates, (~~<408>~~Romans 13:7,8); just payment of debts to creditors, and alms to the poor, which, by what follows, seems to be chiefly intended; and the Septuagint render it,

“do not abstain to do well to the needy;”

and Aben Ezra interprets it of the poor; to them alms are due because of their wants, and by the appointment; of God; hence called “righteousness”, in some copies of (~~<408>~~Matthew 6:1); so money kept from the poor “mammon of unrighteousness”, (~~<2169>~~Luke 16:9). They are, as the word in the Hebrew text signifies, “the owners thereof”^{f80}: rich men are not so much proprietors of good things as they are God's alms givers or stewards to distribute to the poor; and, as often as men have opportunity, they should do good in this way to all, especially to the household of faith, (~~<8160>~~Galatians 6:10); this will hold true, as of temporal good things, so of spiritual; as good advice, exhortation, and doctrine. The Vulgate Latin version is, “do not forbid him to do well that can”; which sense is favoured by Jarchi: and as we should not abstain from doing good ourselves, so neither should we forbid, hinder, or discourage others; but the former sense is best;

when it is in the power of thine hand to do [it]; not to hinder others, as Jarchi, but to do good; when a man has a sufficiency in his hands to do good with; has not only enough for himself and his family, but something to spare; when he has both opportunity and ability; and when he can do it at once and without delay, as follows.

Ver. 28. *Say not unto thy neighbour*, etc.] Either to whom thou art indebted, and who comes for the payment of a just debt; or to any poor and indigent person that applies for alms:

go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; go home, and come tomorrow, and I will pay thee what I owe thee; or do not trouble me now, come another time, and perhaps I may relieve thy wants: this should not be said, because a man cannot be sure of tomorrow that he shall ever see it; nor may it be in the power of his hands, should he live unto the morrow, to do as he promises; his substance may be taken from him; and besides, in the mean time, the poor object may perish for want of relief;

when thou hast it by thee; money to pay thy debts with, or to give alms to the poor; and therefore should give readily and at once, and not make any excuses and delays; “bis dat, qui cito dat”. Some make this to be part of the covetous man’s words, saying, “and there is with thee”; or thou hast enough, thou hast no need to ask of me; thou hast what thou askest; thou art not in want; thou art richer than I; but the other sense is best. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add,

“for thou knowest not what the day following may bring forth;”

or may happen on it.

Ver. 29. *Devise not evil against thy neighbour*, etc.] Or, “plough not evil”⁸¹; turn not up thy heart to find evil against thy neighbour, as the earth is turned up by the plough; (see ³⁸⁰¹³Hosea 10:13). Do not contrive and form schemes in thy mind and thoughts to do him any injury, in his name and character, in his person, property, or family: a good man should devise all the good he can to his fellow creatures, but not evil to any; especially to his neighbour, and as described in the next clause;

seeing he dwelleth securely by thee; having a good opinion of thee, and not suspecting any ill design against him, thinks himself, goods, and family, in safety; and is under no concern to provide for his security, placing his confidence in thee, and perhaps to such a degree as to entrust with his secrets. Now to project evil against such a man is exceeding base; it is doubly sinful; this is an aggravation of the iniquity.

Ver. 30. *Strive not with a man without cause*, Either by words, in a wrangling, quarrelsome, and contentious way, for mere trifles; when there is no foundation for it, no just reason given to form a complaint, or pick a

quarrel upon; or by deeds, by lawsuits, when there is nothing to proceed upon; or it is so trifling, that it is not worth while to litigate it or contend about: such, who strive either way, are far from following the example of Wisdom or Christ, and from taking his advice, (^{<4129>}Matthew 12:19 5:40);

if he have done thee no harm; no real hurt to thy person, nor injury to thy substance; if he has not abused nor defrauded thee, nor taken any thing from thee by force or fraud, nor withheld from thee what is thy right and due. But otherwise the laws of God and man ought to take place; right may be sought for, and justice should be done.

Ver. 31. *Envy thou not the oppressor*, etc.] The man that gets wealth and riches by acts of injustice, by oppressing the poor, by rapine and violence; do not envy his prosperity, and the substance he is possessed of; do not wish to be in his place and circumstances, to enjoy his affluence and ease; do not look upon his happiness with an envious eye and a fretting heart; he is far from being a happy man; his end will be bad; (see ^{<4370>}Psalm 37:1,7);

and choose none of his ways; which he has used to get his riches in; do not follow him in them; for should you do as he has done, and get ever so much, since this would be with the loss of your souls, of what advantage would it be? He makes the best choice that chooses the “good part” that shall not be taken away, (^{<2102>}Luke 10:42); Christ, and the ways of Christ.

Ver. 32. *For the froward [is] abomination to the Lord*, etc.] The perverse man, that pleases not God, and is contrary to all men, as the Jews were; one froward in his words and actions: “who transgresses the law”, as the Arabic version renders it; one that acts contrary to the nature, will, and word of God; and such an one is not only abominable in his sight, but an “abomination” itself; it is sin, which is that abominable thing that God hates, that makes him so: and the Targum is,

“for iniquity is abominable before the Lord;”

but his secret [is] with the righteous: not such who are outwardly so to others, or trust in themselves that they are righteous, or seek for righteousness by their own works; but such who are justified by the righteousness of Christ, which faith receives from him, and in consequence of which a man lives soberly and righteously: with these the “secret” of the Lord is; of his love, grace, and favour, which was from everlasting, and is manifested in regeneration; of his purposes of grace, with respect to election, redemption, calling, and adoption, which is made known in

effectual calling; of his covenant, as that he is their covenant God, Christ is their covenant head and Mediator, and that they have an interest in all the grace, blessings, and promises of it; of the Gospel, and the several mysteries of it, which are so to carnal men; of his providences, what he is doing, or what he is about to do, and will do hereafter, (^{<3807>}Amos 3:7); and of communion and fellowship with him. The phrase denotes friendship and familiarity; God deals with the righteous as a man does with his intimate friend, converses freely with him, and discloses his secrets to him: and the word is rendered “confabulation” by the Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions; see (^{<3804>}Job 29:4,5 ^{<1254>}Psalms 25:14).

Ver. 33. *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked*, etc.] The wicked man, being a transgressor of the law, is under the curse of it; and all that he has, his house, his substance, his very blessings are curses; (see ^{<3802>}Malachi 2:2 ^{<3802>}Zechariah 5:2-4); he is accursed amidst his greatest affluence, and sometimes from a plentiful estate is reduced to penury and want: and Aben Ezra interprets it, “the curse of want”; and the Vulgate Latin version is, “want from the Lord is”, etc.

but he blesseth the habitation of the just; the righteous man, as before described; he is blessed himself, having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and his sins forgiven him for his sake; and what he has of worldly substance, though it be ever so little, he has it with a blessing; and therefore it is better than the riches of many wicked men; his house, though it is but a cottage, as the word ^{f82} here signifies, is blessed with the presence of God in it; his family, his children, and servants, are blessed, having his instructions and example, and especially when made effectual by the grace of God; as the house of Obededom was blessed for the sake of the ark, so is a just man’s house, being a “bethel”, an house of God, blessed on account of his worship in it; (see ^{<1061>}2 Samuel 6:11).

Ver. 34. *Surely he scorneth the scorners*, etc.] That make a mock at sin, a jest of religion, that scoff at the doctrines of the Gospel and the professors of it; these the Lord looks upon, laughs at, and has them in derision. The Greek version and two apostles render it, “he resisteth the proud”, (^{<1085>}1 Peter 5:5 ^{<5046>}James 4:6). Such who are haughty and arrogant, that exalt themselves and despise others; as those of a pharisaical spirit are and do, are abhorred and despised by the Lord; he sets himself against them, is their enemy, “and scatters [them] in the imagination of their hearts”, (^{<1051>}Luke 1:51). L’Empereur observes ^{f83} that this version is quite agreeable

to the Hebrew text and the sense of Jewish writers: R. Alshech says, that $\mu\text{y}\text{x}\text{l}$, rendered “scorners”, are such who will not look upon the divine Being, but go on boldly in sin, as if there was no God; and Kimchi explains the word by $\mu\text{y}\text{a}\text{g}\text{t}\text{m}$, who exalt themselves, or are proud; and because proud men yield to none, but resist others, hence the verb is used, by the Septuagint, to resist; agreeably to which the Targum is,

“he shall drive away;”

and Alshech,

“he shall destroy;”

and Gersom,

“God shall make others mock them;”

which is, to resist them;

but he giveth grace unto the lowly; or humble souls; such who are made truly sensible of sin, and lie low in their own sight on account of it; who, sensible of the imperfection and insufficiency of their own righteousness, submit to the righteousness of Christ; ascribe their salvation, and all the blessings of it, to the free grace of God; own the deficiency of their duties, and disclaim all merit in them; think the worst of themselves, and the best of others; and humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and are patient under every adverse dispensation of Providence; knowing what their deserts are, how undeserving of any favour, and how deserving of the divine displeasure. Now God first gives grace to these persons to make them thus humble and lowly which they are not naturally, and then he gives them more grace, according to his promise; and it is in proof of God’s giving more grace to such persons that the Apostle James produces this passage, (²⁰⁴⁶Proverbs 4:6). Grace is God’s gift, first and last, what is had in first conversion, in after supplies, and for perseverance to the end: sanctifying, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace, are the pure gifts of God, of his own favour and good will, without any merit, motive, or condition in the creature; and which he gives liberally and bountifully; for not favour with men is here meant, as some think, but the grace of God.

Ver. 35. *The wise shall inherit glory*, etc.] The wise are the same with the just and lowly before mentioned, to whom God gives grace, and to these he gives glory. The “wise” are such who are so, not in a natural, civil, or

notional sense, or that are wise in the things of nature, in civil affairs and in speculative matters of religion; but in a spiritual sense, who are wise unto salvation; who know themselves, the sinfulness of their nature, their inability to do that which is good, and their want of righteousness to justify them before God; who are sensible of the sickness and diseases of their souls, their spiritual poverty, and their great folly and ignorance with respect to things of a spiritual nature; who know Christ, and him crucified, the way of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him; that know him, not only notionally, but so as to apply unto him, and rest on him for salvation; who build it on him the foundation, on him only, and give him all the glory of it; and who have also a competent knowledge of the Gospel, and a comfortable experience of the truths of it; and who take up a profession of religion upon such an experience, and hold it fast without depending on it, and have a conversation becoming it, walking circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Now these shall “inherit glory”; not the glory of this world, or honour among men in it; but the glory of another, of which the glory of this world, and of, he most excellent things in it, is but a faint resemblance: it is unseen, inconceivable, and incomparable; it is an eternal glory which Christ is entered into, and the same the Father has given him; and will lie in the vision of God, and communion with him; in beholding the glory of Christ, and in having a glory put upon them both in soul and body: and this they shall enjoy as an inheritance; not by purchase or acquisition, but by free gift; as a bequest of their Father; which comes to them as children, through the death of Christ the testator, and will be possessed for ever, as inheritances run;

but shame shall be the promotion of fools; not fools in a natural, but in a religious sense; such who know not themselves, nor the way of salvation; who mock at sin, and scoff at religion: these and everyone of these “shall take” or “lift up shame”^{f84}, as their part and portion, alluding to the heave offering under the law, in opposition to the glory the wise shall inherit and possess. Or, “shame shall lift up fools”^{f85}; hold them forth, and make them manifest and conspicuous: all the promotion they shall be raised unto will be only shame and confusion, if not in this world, yet in that to come; for, when they shall rise from the dead, it will be “to shame and everlasting contempt”, (^{711D}Daniel 12:2). The Targum is,

“fools shall receive tribulation;”

that shall be their inheritance in the other world.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 4

In this chapter Solomon advises to seek after wisdom, to avoid bad company, and to continue in the right paths of goodness and truth: he excites attention to what he had to say, from the relation he stood in to the persons addressed; from the nature of his instructions, which were good and profitable; and from his own example, in attending to those his parents gave him, (^{<3001>}Proverbs 4:1-4); He exhorts above all things to get wisdom, from the superior excellency of it, and from the preservation, promotion, and honour, to be had by it, (^{<3005>}Proverbs 4:5-9); and he further enforces big exhortations, from their being the means of a comfortable life, and of the prolongation of it, and of leading in a right way without straitness or stumbling, (^{<3010>}Proverbs 4:10-13). And then proceeds to caution against bad company, and going into a bad way of life; which is enforced from the mischief done by those that walk in it, and from the darkness of it, to which the path of the just is opposed, (^{<3014>}Proverbs 4:14-19). And the exhortation to attend to and observe his instructions, and keep them, is repeated, from the consideration of their being life and health to them, (^{<3020>}Proverbs 4:20-22); and that they might be preserved, and not departed from, direction's are given about ordering the heart, mouth, lips, eyes, and feet, (^{<3023>}Proverbs 4:23-27).

Ver. 1. *Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father*, etc.] Either of God their father, as Gersom interprets it; or rather of Solomon their father: and so he recommends his instruction from the relation he stood in to them; for, since he was their father, he would give them no bad instruction; and, since they were his children, they ought to receive it: by whom are meant, not his children in a natural sense, or the children of his body; but his disciples, such who applied to him for knowledge, and whom he undertook to learn;

and attend to know understanding; what would serve to enlighten, enlarge, improve, and inform their understandings; what would lead them into the knowledge and understanding of things divine and spiritual, and which

would be worth knowing; and of having their understandings stored and enriched with.

Ver. 2. *For I give you good doctrine*, etc.] Whose author, matter, use, and tendency, are good, and therefore should be received; so the Gospel is called, (^{<5016>}1 Timothy 4:6); and no other is here meant: it is the doctrine concerning Wisdom or Christ, as the following verses show; which serves to exalt him, and makes for the good and welfare of immortal souls; and such is the doctrine of the Scriptures, of Christ and his apostles, even all the doctrines and truths of the Gospel;

forsake you not my law; or “doctrine”^{f86}; not the law given on Mount Sinai, as Gersom interprets it; but the doctrine of Christ, which goes out from Mount Zion: this the children of Wisdom should not neglect, relinquish, drop, or depart from; but should keep it, and abide by it.

Ver. 3. *For I was my father’s son*, etc.] Or, “a son to my father”^{f87}; so Solomon was to God, his heavenly Father, (^{<1074>}2 Samuel 7:14); which Jarchi observes, and gives as the sense of this place: but his father David is meant, whose son he was; though he was not his only one, he had others besides him. But the sense is, that he was his darling, his beloved son, whom he loved above the rest; as he was beloved of the Lord, and therefore his name was called Jedidiah, so he was beloved of his father; and, because he had a peculiar love for him, he took a particular care of his education;

tender and only [beloved] in the sight of my mother; his mother Bathsheba, who had a most affectionate regard to him; and therefore in his tender age, as soon as he was susceptible of instructions, gave them to him, which being received, made deep and lasting impressions on him; (see ^{<1301>}Proverbs 31:1,2). The marginal reading is, “to the sons of my mother”; for Bathsheba had more sons, (^{<1305>}1 Chronicles 3:5); both readings may be retained, “beloved in the sight of my mother’s sons”. Gersom interprets this of the people of Israel, who were sons to God their Father; and were the only nation that received the law, and which they received at the time of their coming out of Egypt, in the days of their youth.

Ver. 4. *He taught me also, and said unto me*, etc.] The Targum is,

“they taught me,”

his father and his mother; and so the Septuagint version,

“who said and taught me;”

and the Arabic version,

“they both taught me, and said unto me;”

but in the Hebrew it is singular, and is restrained to the father. He taught him when he was very young, and also gave him instructions when he was older, and a little before his own death; (see ^{<3308>}1 Chronicles 28:8,9 29:1); he taught him by the several psalms he wrote; some of which are called “maschil”, instructive or causing to understand; two of them particularly were written for him, the seventy-second and the hundred twenty-seventh psalms; he taught him in the following words. How far the words of David his father reach is not agreed on, on all hands; some think they end with (^{<3045>}Proverbs 4:5); others with (^{<3046>}Proverbs 4:6), others with the (^{<3049>}Proverbs 4:9), and the words of Solomon begin at (^{<3040>}Proverbs 4:10): some will have it that they take in the whole chapter, which is not probable; nay, others say that the whole of the book following is his, which can by no means be agreed to: it seems most likely to me that they end at (^{<3046>}Proverbs 4:6), and at most are not to be carried beyond (^{<3049>}Proverbs 4:9);

let thine heart retain my words: says David to his son: the instructions he gave him by word of mouth, concerning his moral behaviour, relating to political things, the government of the people; and especially such as concerned the everlasting welfare of his soul, or were about Wisdom or Christ, and the knowledge of divine and spiritual things; these he would have him lay up in his heart, and keep them there, as a rich treasure, to have recourse unto upon all occasions;

keep my commandments, and live: which commandments may respect him both in his private and public capacity, and in a religious and political one; how he should behave as a man, a king, and one that feared God: as well as they may respect his orders for the building of the temple, and settling and establishing the worship of God in it; by observing which he would live comfortably and honourably, and to a good old age.

Ver. 5. *Get wisdom, get understanding,* etc.] Not only moral and political wisdom and understanding, but that which is spiritual and evangelical; Christ, and the knowledge of him; he being the only happy man that has an interest in him, and is possessed of him by faith, which is the meaning of getting him; (see Gill on ^{<3013>}Proverbs 3:13”); by which it appears, that

what Solomon had before delivered, and afterwards repeats and urges, was the same his father David, that wise, great, and good man, taught him; and which he mentions, the more to recommend the getting of wisdom and understanding to others;

forget [it] not; when gotten, keep it in remembrance; be continually meditating on Wisdom, or Christ, his glories and excellencies; the fulness of grace and truth in him; the blessings of goodness which come by him; the great use and profit of having and enjoying him;

neither decline from the words of my mouth; the above instructions, and all others he gave unto him.

Ver. 6. *Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee*, etc.] That is, Wisdom, or Christ. Men may be said to forsake Christ when they forsake the assembly of his church and people, which are his other self; when they forsake his ministers, his ambassadors, and representatives; when they forsake his word and ordinances; when they drop the doctrines of the Gospel, or depart from them; when they quit the profession they have formerly made. Nominal believers and formal professors may forsake him finally and totally; true believers only partially and for a time, through the weakness of the flesh, the temptations of Satan, the snares of the world, and the prevalence of corruption; and therefore such an exhortation is necessary, and ought to be regarded. To forsake Christ is a very great evil; it is against a man's own interest, and is of dangerous consequence, and therefore to be guarded against; to abide by him, his truths and ordinances, is very commendable; such shall be "preserved" by him safe to his kingdom and glory;

love her, and she shall keep thee; Christ is to be loved for the excellencies and perfections of his nature; for the loveliness of his person; for the love he has showed to his people; for what he in love has done and suffered for them, and is now doing; for the fulness of his grace and salvation, and the suitableness of them to them; for the communion he indulges them in with himself; for the relations of an head, husband, father, brother, and friend, he stands in to them: and also under the character of Wisdom, he being the only wise God and their Saviour, the Wisdom of God and Wisdom to them; and whose Gospel is the Wisdom of God in a mystery. He is to be loved, all of him and that belong unto him, and above all creatures and things, ardently, sincerely, and constantly; and such lovers of him shall be "kept" by him from the evil of the world; from the power and dominion of

sin, and condemnation by it; from being destroyed by Satan, and his temptations; and from a final and total falling away, so as not to perish everlastingly; they are kept in his own hands, in his Father's love and his own, in the everlasting covenant; and in a state of grace, of sanctification, justification, and adoption. Not that loving Christ, and cleaving to him, are the causes of this preservation; but his love, grace, and power; yet these are descriptive of the persons kept and preserved: and the preservation and keeping of them is used as an argument to love him, and cleave unto him.

Ver. 7. *Wisdom [is] the principal thing*, etc.] Or principal, one; the principal of persons and things; the principal of persons, angels or men: Christ is superior to angels, having a more excellent name and nature than they; he is the God, the Creator, and head of them, and is above them in the human nature; he is superior to men, to the greatest of men, he is King of kings and Lord of lords, and to the best of men the saints. Are they kings? he is their King: are they priests? he is the great High Priest: are any of them prophets, teachers, shepherds? he is the great Prophet in Israel; a Teacher, that never any taught or spoke like him; the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls: is the church a family? he is the Master of it: is it a body? he is the Head: is it a building? he is the Foundation and Corner Stone; yea, the chief Master Builder. He is the beginning and chief of all God's ways, and the chief in them; in election, in the council of peace, and covenant of grace; in redemption and salvation, in grace and glory; he is all in all. Or the words may be rendered, "Wisdom [is] the beginning"^{f88}; so Christ is called, (⁵⁰¹⁸Colossians 1:18); a phrase expressive of his eternity, and of his being the first cause and author of all things, both in the old and new creation. Or thus, that which is "the beginning of wisdom get"^{f89}, etc. which is the fear of the Lord; (see ⁴⁰⁰⁷Proverbs 1:7 9:10);

[therefore] get wisdom; not an interest in Christ, but a knowledge of it; and make use of all means to obtain a greater knowledge of him, and of interest in him, which is what the apostle calls "winning" Christ; by which he means, not getting an interest in him, that he had already, but gaining a greater degree of knowledge of him, as the context shows, (³¹⁰⁸Philippians 3:8-10); or, "buy wisdom"^{f90}; that is, without money and without price; so Christ advises to buy gold and white raiment of him, his grace and righteousness, (⁴⁸¹⁸Revelation 3:18 ²⁵⁰¹Isaiah 55:1);

and with all thy getting get understanding; another name for Christ; (see ⁴⁰⁸⁴Proverbs 8:14); Or, "along with all thy getting"^{f91}, or "above all"; let

not Christ be wanting; he is the one thing needful, the good and better part and portion, which, if missing, all other substance signifies little: or part with all for this pearl of great price, Wisdom, and prefer it to all worldly substance; look upon all but dross in comparison of Christ and the knowledge of him: all other gettings or substance are only for the body, this for the soul, and the eternal welfare of it; they are only for a time, this for eternity; they are not satisfying, but, having this, a soul has enough, has all things; Christ being his, all things are his; he possesses all things, and all other things are not blessings without him.

Ver. 8. *Exalt her, and she shall promote thee*, etc.] Christ is to be exalted in his person, by asserting his proper deity; by ascribing all divine perfections to him; by allowing him to be the author of all divine works; by giving him divine worship and homage; by owning his divine and eternal sonship, and distinct personality: he is to be exalted in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and as the only Redeemer and Saviour; by trusting in him, embracing his Gospel, and submitting to his ordinances, and such that exalt him, he will “promote” them here and hereafter; of which more in the next clause. According to the Talmudists^{f92}, the word for “exalt” signifies a diligent search, by turning things about to find out what is sought; and so the Septuagint interpret the word in the sense of “searching”, (~~288B~~ Jeremiah 50:26);

she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her: by faith: for this is an act of faith, and a very considerable one, and is expressive of great nearness to Christ, of much intimacy and familiarity with him, of strong love and affection to him, of a good degree of boldness used with him, and of joy and exaltation in him; for such an action is used by persons near akin, and are very familiar with, and have a very great affection for one another, and use much freedom with each other, and rejoice at meeting together. Now such who embrace Christ, in the arms of their faith, as their alone Saviour, such he promotes and “brings to honour”; not to honour among men, for to embrace Christ and exalt him is the way to disgrace, though the disgrace is an honour, and will be before long rolled off; but to honour hereafter. Such will be set at his right hand, and be owned by him before his Father and his angels; and they will be placed on the same throne with him, and will reign with him for ever and ever; see (~~0020~~ 1 Samuel 2:30).

Ver. 9. *She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace*, etc.] This, and the following clause, explain what that honour is Christ promotes and brings his followers to here and hereafter: he gives them grace and more grace; “an increase of grace”, so the Vulgate Latin version renders it; and some think James refers to this passage, (^{<3046>}Proverbs 4:6). The grace that Christ gives is very ornamental to his people: justifying grace greatly beautifies and adorns them; it not only covers the nakedness of their souls, and all their spots and imperfections, and through it all their sins are caused to pass from them; but they are made exceeding beautiful, perfectly comely through this comeliness, a perfection of beauty by it; and which is often signified by that which is very ornamental, rich, and costly, as fine linen, clothing of wrought gold, raiment of needlework, a Wedding garment, stuck with jewels and precious stones: sanctifying grace, which also is Christ’s gift, is very ornamental; it is called “the beauty of holiness”; it is that by which a man is made like to God, and conformed to the image of Christ; it is the curious workmanship of the Spirit of God; or what makes a man beautiful, and makes him meet for heaven and happiness: every grace is ornamental; faith, hope, love, humility, etc. these are like rows of jewels, and chains of gold, about the neck. And when this ornament is said to be given “to the head”, it is not to be understood of the natural head of a man, but of his whole person, it gives a comeliness to; and may denote the visibility of it, as it appears in the life and conversation;

a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee; by which is meant eternal glory and happiness, called a “crown”, an ensign of royal dignity, which, belongs to such as are made kings and priests unto God; and is given to conquerors, even who are more than conquerors through Christ, and as a reward of diligence and faithfulness, (^{<6120>}Revelation 2:10). It is sometimes called a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, an incorruptible and never-fading one, and, as here, “a crown of glory”; the saints in heaven will have a glory put upon them, both in soul and body; they will appear with Christ in glory, and be crowned with glory and honour, as he is; they will be clothed and surrounded with it: and so some render it,

“she will compass thee about with a crown of glory as with a shield”^{<f93>};

(see ^{<4152>}Psalm 5:12). This Christ is said to “deliver”; it is in his hands, laid up in him, and is safe with him; he has power to dispose of it, and it may be expected from him; (see ^{<5048>}2 Timothy 4:8).

Ver. 10. *Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings*, etc.] Some think David is still speaking to his son Solomon, or Solomon continues relating what his father said to him; though I rather think these are Solomon's words to his son, to everyone of his children that came to him for instruction, or he took upon him to teach; whom he advises to listen to what he had further to say, and to embrace, and not reject, his doctrines;

and the years of thy life shall be many; (see ^{<4101>}Proverbs 3:1,2); long life here, and length of days for ever and ever, or eternal life hereafter; which must be a very forcible argument to engage attention to his sayings.

Ver. 11. *I have taught thee in the way of wisdom*, etc.] In the way that leads to it, or is concerning it; in the Gospel, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery, the manifold wisdom of God, and which directs to Christ and the knowledge of him, who is true wisdom; this is another reason or argument why the wise man's instructions should be attended to;

I have led thee in right paths; in paths of righteousness, holiness, and truth; in such as are agreeable to the will and word of God, and which lead right on to the city of habitation; and therefore such teachings and leadings should be followed, and such ways walked in.

Ver. 12. *When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened*, etc.] By enemies, or attended with difficulties and obstructions, or subject to dangers, but be at freedom and liberty in walking; for though saints do not walk in the broad road with sinners, yet they are brought into a large place, and their steps are enlarged under them, and their hearts are enlarged to run the way of God's commandments; and a wide field of truth and duty such have to walk in, who are taught and led in the ways of wisdom and righteousness, (^{<49819>}Psalm 18:19,36 119:32,45);

and when thou runnest, thou shall not stumble; such that make haste to keep the commandments of God, that run with alacrity and cheerfulness in their Christian race, and in the way of their duty, shall not stumble, through the deceitfulness of sin, the snares of the world, and the temptations of Satan, so as to fall and perish.

Ver. 13. *Take fast hold of instruction*, etc.] Not the law, as Jarchi and Gersom interpret it; but the instruction of wisdom, the doctrine of Christ or the Gospel; (see ^{<4101>}Proverbs 8:1-10); which is an instruction into the mind and will of God, concerning the salvation of men; into the grace of God, showing that salvation, in all its branches, is of pure grace; into the person

and offices of Christ, and into the business of salvation through him; into the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by him. This should be “taken fast hold of”; in order to which, men should take heed unto it, attentively hear it; they should come with a cordial affection to it, and an eager desire after it, or they will never lay fast hold on it; for taking fast hold, as it supposes a careful attention to the Gospel, so a reception of it in the love of it, and an eagerness to be possessed of it: such may be said to take fast hold on it, who receive it into their hearts, and not into their heads only; head knowledge of the Gospel instruction is not hold fast enough, it must be heart knowledge of it; it is taken fast hold on when it is mixed with faith when heard; when it is digested and incorporated as it were into men, and becomes the ingrafted word; when men are led experimentally and practically into it, and are not hearers only, but doers of it; and, being thus taken fast hold of,

let [her] not go; the instruction of wisdom, or the Gospel of Christ; do not drop it, nor depart from it, nor waver about it; nor be languid in a profession of it, nor indifferent to it: “be not remiss”,^{f94}, as the word signifies; or let not thine hand be remiss, or let not thine hand go; having, as it were with both hands, took fast hold of the Gospel, hold it fast, neither drop it through negligence and carelessness, nor suffer it to be taken from thee by fraud or force;

keep her, for she [is] thy life; which may be understood either of the Gospel, Wisdom’s instruction, which should be kept as a rich treasure, and not parted with at any rate; since it is the means of quickening dead sinners; of showing sensible ones the way of life by Christ; of producing faith in them, by which they live upon him; and of maintaining and supporting the spiritual life in them, and of reviving and comforting them under the most drooping and afflictive circumstances; a man would as soon part with his life surely as part with this! Or else, seeing the feminine gender is here used, which does not agree with the word translated “instruction”, but with “wisdom”, mentioned (~~2011~~ Proverbs 4:11); so Aben Ezra; therefore Christ may be here meant, who is to be kept as the pearl of great price, being more precious than rubies and all desirable things, and especially since he is the “life” of his people: he is the author and maintainer of their spiritual life; he is their life itself, it is hid with him; and because he lives, they live also: all the comforts and supplies of life are from him, and he is their eternal life; it is given through him and by him, and ties greatly in the enjoyment of him.

Ver. 14. *Enter not into the path of the wicked*, etc.] Which leads to eternal death; join not with them in their wicked ways and practices; have no fellowship, keep no company, with them; do not set one foot in the path they tread, lest thou shouldest be tempted to proceed to more ungodliness; you do not know where and when there will be a stop, when once you begin, therefore enter not. The Vulgate Latin version is, “do not delight in the paths of the ungodly”: but this supposes not only entrance, but progress and continuance in them, whereas the first is dehorted from in these words:

and go not in the way of evil [men]; if tempted and prevailed upon to take a step and make a trial, do not proceed; withdraw at once, do not go on. Some render it, seeing the word used has sometimes the signification of blessedness in it, “do not esteem the way of evil men blessed”¹⁹⁵; nor reckon thyself or them happy that walk in such ways; they are far from it: hence the Targum, Septuagint, and Syriac versions are, “do not envy the ways of wicked men”; their seeming pleasure will end in bitterness: the Arabic version is, “do not imitate” them; do not follow their example, and do as they do.

Ver. 15. *Avoid it*, etc.] As dangerous and pernicious, as abominable and detestable; or, “flee from it”, as the Vulgate Latin version: Jarchi and Gersom interpret it, “make it void”; cause it to cease, destroy it, do all you can to hinder the wicked from accomplishing their designs;

pass not by it; do not come near it; keep at a distance from it, that you may not be drawn into it; abstain from all appearance of evil, and everything that may lead to it;

turn from it, and pass away; the Targum adds, “from them”, from wicked men. This heap of words is used to show the danger of bad company; to dissuade from the least approach to it; and to express the vehement desire of the wise man to preserve his son, and all well inclined persons, from it.

Ver. 16. *For they sleep not, except they have done mischief*, etc.] Or they cannot sleep, as Jarchi and Gersom interpret it. Oftentimes they cannot sleep on their beds for devising mischief, their thoughts are so intensely set on contriving wicked schemes; and when they have so done, they cannot sleep until they have executed them; they are continually restless and uneasy day and night, like the troubled sea, constantly casting up mire and dirt. Who would keep such company as these?

and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause [some] to fall; into the snares and traps they lay for them, or into sin and calamity by it; the former of which they endeavour by all means to draw men into, and the latter is the unavoidable consequence of it. They imitate their father the devil, both delight in sin, and in the ruin of their fellow creatures; it is a sport to thereto do mischief, and they have no pleasure without it; (see ^{<01123>}Proverbs 11:23). What company are such!

Ver. 17. *For they eat the bread of wickedness,* etc.] Either that is gotten by wicked and unlawful means, or wickedness itself is bread unto them; it is that to their minds as bread is to their bodies; they feed upon it with as much eagerness, appetite, gust, and pleasure; it is a sweet morsel to them; it is meat, drink, sleep, and everything to them; they take the highest satisfaction and the utmost delight in it;

and drink the wine of violence: either that which is obtained by rapine and violence; or they as greedily commit such acts of oppression and injury as a man drinks a glass of wine; they do not drink up iniquity like water only, but even like wine, the most generous and delicious. Wherefore all society with such men should be avoided.

Ver. 18. *But the path of the just [is] as the shining light,* etc.] The “just” man is one that is made righteous through the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; and who is created anew in Christ, in righteousness and true holiness; and, under the influence of divine grace, lives soberly, righteously, and godly: the “path” he is directed to walk in, and does, is Christ himself, the way, the truth, and the life; through whose blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, he goes to God for grace and mercy, for peace, pardon, and acceptance, for fresh supplies of grace, and in order to enjoy communion with him; and who also is the way of salvation, and to eternal life and happiness: and, besides this grand and principal path, there are the paths of truth, righteousness, and holiness; the path of duty and obedience; the way of the commandments of God, and ordinances of Christ: and this path he walks in, whether of grace or duty, is “as the shining light”; or of the morning, when the day first dawns, or at least when the sun rises. Such is the light beamed in at first conversion, which directs men to walk in the above mentioned paths; it is a light after a night of darkness, as such is the state of unregeneracy; which, though at first is but glimmering, yet afterwards is clear and shining; especially when Christ the sun of righteousness appears, or is revealed, as the hope of glory. The

first grace in conversion is a “true light [that] shines”, (1 John 2:8), by which a soul sees its own vileness and filthiness, the insufficiency of its own righteousness; and the fulness, suitableness, and ability Christ as a Saviour, and has some discerning of Gospel truths;

that shineth more and more unto the perfect day; or “going and shining”^{f96}, or “enlightening”: it shines clearer and clearer, so does true grace; it grows and increases more and more, every grace does, faith, hope, love, patience, humility, etc. the light of the knowledge of Christ the way, though it is imperfect, yet capable of being increased, and is increased by means of the ministry of the word and ordinances; which increase God has promised, saints pursue after, and attain unto. Light into the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, increases yet more and more; whereby a soul walks pleasantly, comfortably, and safely, in right path, “until the perfect day” of glory comes, a day without clouds; when there will be nothing to interpose between God and them; when there will be no more clouds of darkness, unbelief, doubts, and fears; when the sun will always be seen, no more withdrawn, eclipsed, or set; even Christ, the sun of righteousness, whose glory will always be beheld by the righteous to all eternity: when there will be no more night of affliction, desertion, and death; when the light of knowledge will be clear and perfect, and saints shall see face to face, and know as they are known; and when not only the light of the righteous shall be so clear, distinct, and perfect, but they themselves shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of God. The words may be rendered, “the prepared day”^{f97}; appointed in the decrees of God, and firmly established by them: the invisible glories of the heavenly state, which make this everlasting day, are things which God has prepared for his people; the kingdom and glory itself, the inheritance of the saints in light, is prepared for them from the foundation of the world. And, since such is the path of the just, who would walk in the ways of the wicked? which are the reverse of this, as the following words show.

Ver. 19. *The way of the wicked [is] as darkness*, etc.] They are in the darkness of sin, ignorance, error, and unbelief; their works are works of darkness; the way in which they are leads to eternal darkness, ruin, and misery, and so must be most uncomfortable and dangerous;

they know not at what they stumble; they stumble at the word, which they are ignorant of, and at Christ, whom they have no knowledge of; and

through the temptations of Satan and snares of the world, which they are not aware of, nor upon their guard against.

Ver. 20. *My son, attend to my words*, etc.] Which go before and which follow after, his doctrines, instructions, cautions, and exhortations;

incline thine ear unto my sayings; stoop and bow the ear; listen attentively to what is said, as being of the greatest moment and importance.

Ver. 21. *Let them not depart from thine eyes*, etc.] Commit them to writing, frequently read them over; let them be always in sight, as a rule and directory to steer the course of life by. Some understand this of the wicked, as if the sense was, let not them, the wicked, cause them to depart from thine eyes; nor thee to neglect them, by their bad advice, solicitations to sin, and ill examples; (see Gill on "~~20:21~~ Proverbs 3:21");

keep them in the midst of thine heart; lay them up there, and ponder them; often meditate upon them, and do not forget them; show the most affectionate regard unto them, and look upon them as a most inestimable treasure, for which no place is so fit a repository as the heart.

Ver. 22. *For they [are] life unto those that find them*, etc.] The words or doctrines of Christ, whose type Solomon was, are to be found in the field of the Scriptures, by diligent searching for them; and being found, they are the means of spiritual life, and of maintaining it, and of showing the way, and bringing unto eternal life; (see ~~4:63~~ John 6:63);

and health to all their flesh; the whole man, soul and body, as they are the means of preserving the body from many diseases, which intemperance, lust, and luxury, lead unto, and are curbed by these; so of healing the various diseases of the soul; and, however, of directing to a panacea for them, to the blood of Christ, which is the true balm of Gilead, and he the physician of souls. Moreover, the doctrines of the Gospel are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus; they are sound, salutary, and healthful, and serve to keep the soul in good plight, and the body too. The Septuagint render it, "to all flesh": that is, to all men; but this is not true in fact; for to some the Gospel of Christ, through contempt and rejection of it, is the savour of death unto death.

Ver. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, etc.] The mind from vanity, the understanding from error, the will from perverseness, the conscience clear of guilt, the affections from being inordinate and set on evil objects, the

thoughts from being employed on bad subjects; and the whole from falling into the hands of the enemy, or being the possession of Satan: great diligence had need be used in keeping it, since it is naturally so deceitful and treacherous; a strict eye is to be kept upon it; all the avenues to it to be watched, that nothing hurtful enters, or evil comes out; it is to be kept by all manner of means that can be thought of, by prayer, hearing, reading, meditation; and, above all, by applying to Christ for his grace and Spirit to sanctify, preserve, and keep it. Or, “above all keeping, keep thine heart”¹⁹⁸; though other things are to be kept, and care taken of them, as kingdoms and cities, and towns and families, and treasures and riches; yet the heart above all:

for out of it [are] the issues of life; of natural life: it is the seat of it, from whence all actions of life are derived; it is, as philosophers say, the first that lives, and the last that dies; and it is the seat of spiritual life the principle of it is formed in it; from whence all spiritual and vital actions flow, and which lead unto and issue in eternal life: as is a man’s heart, such is his state now, and will be hereafter; if the heart is quickened and sanctified by the grace of God, the man will live a life of faith and holiness here, and enjoy everlasting life hereafter: and if the heart is right, so will the actions of men be; they are regulated and denominated by it; they will then spring from right principles, and be directed to right ends, and performed with right views; great care therefore should be taken of the heart, since so much depends upon it, and it is so well known to God the searcher of it.

Ver. 24. *Put away from thee a froward mouth*, etc.] A mouth speaking froward and perverse things; things contrary to right reason, to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; blasphemies against God or men; every thing that is untrue, unchaste, unjust, foolish, and filthy; all swearing, lying, and everything that is repugnant to truth and justice. Some understand it of men that are liars, blasphemers, and froward persons, who are to be shunned and avoided, and to be debarred the houses and society of good men;

and perverse lips put far from thee; do not make use of them thyself, nor keep company with men of such a character. Much the same thing is meant as before.

Ver. 25. *Let thine eyes look right on*, etc.] To the path of truth and holiness, without turning or looking to the right hand or left, as it is afterwards expressed; to the word of truth, as the rule to walk by; to

Christ, the author and finisher of faith, from whom all grace, and the supplies of it, are to be had; and to the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God;

and thine eyelids look straight before thee; to the precepts of the word, to observe them; to the promises of it for encouragement; to the examples of the saints gone before, as motives to excite diligence, and to exercise patience, faith, and hope; to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life, and to the blessed hope laid up in heaven.

Ver. 26. *Ponder the path of thy feet*, etc.] Consider well what path it is, whether right or wrong; or weigh it in the balances of thought, as Aben Ezra; or rather in the balances of the word, and see whether it agrees with that or not. The Septuagint version is, “make straight paths for thy feet”; to which the author of the epistle to the Hebrews seems to have respect, (^{<823>}Hebrews 12:13);

and let all thy walls be established; so as to walk on steadily, constantly, uniformly, and not be easily moved out of the ways of religion and truth. Or, “let all thy ways be prepared”, or “directed”, or “disposed”^{f99}; according to the rule of the divine word. Some render it as a promise, “and all thy ways shall be established”^{f100}; when care is taken to look well into them; (see ^{<444>}2 Chronicles 20:20).

Ver. 27. *Turn not to the right hand nor to the left*, etc.] Either into the road of immorality and profaneness, or into that of error, superstition, and false worship; but attend to the way of holiness and truth, directed to in the word of God; (see ^{<232>}Isaiah 30:21); nor be moved out of it by threatenings and menaces, nor by flatteries and promises; neither be cast down with adversity, nor be lifted up with prosperity; but keep on in an even way, attending to that which is just and right; leaving all events with God, as knowing you are in the way of your duty, and in which he would have you walk;

remove, by foot from evil; from walking in evil ways and along with evil men, and from doing evil things; abstain from all appearance of evil, keep at a distance from it; the evil of sin brings on the evil of punishment. There are two verses added in the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions, which are not in the Hebrew text;

“for the ways which are on the right hand God knoweth; but those that are on the left are perverse. He will make thy paths right, and promote thy goings in peace.”

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 5

The general instruction of this chapter is to avoid whoredom, and make use of lawful marriage, and keep to that. It is introduced with an exhortation to attend to wisdom and understanding, (~~218B~~ Proverbs 5:1,2); one part of which lies in shunning an adulterous woman; who is described by her flattery, with which she deceives; by the end she brings men to, which is destruction and death; and by the uncertainty of her ways, which cannot be known, (~~218B~~ Proverbs 5:3-6). Wherefore men are advised to keep at the utmost distance from her, (~~218B~~ Proverbs 5:7,8); lest their honour, strength, wealth, and labours, be given to others, (~~218B~~ Proverbs 5:9,10); and repentance and mourning follow, when too late, (~~218B~~ Proverbs 5:11-14). And, as a remedy against whoredom, entering into a marriage state is advised to, and a strict regard to that; allegorically expressed by a man's drinking water out of his fountain, and by his wife being as a loving hind and pleasant roe to him, the single object of his affections, (~~218B~~ Proverbs 5:15-19). As also the consideration of the divine omniscience is proposed, to deter him from the sin of adultery, (~~218B~~ Proverbs 5:20,21); as well as the inevitable ruin wicked men are brought into by it, (~~218B~~ Proverbs 5:22,23).

Ver. 1. *My son, attend unto my wisdom*, etc.] Not the wisdom of the world or of the flesh, worldly wisdom and carnal policy; but spiritual and evangelical wisdom; such as one that is greater than Solomon has in him, even Christ; “for in him are ~~218B~~ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”, (~~218B~~ Colossians 2:3); and which he teaches and communicates to others, even all proper instructions for conduct in life: the Gospel, and each of the doctrines of it, which are “the wisdom of God in a mystery”, (~~418B~~ 1 Corinthians 2:7): these every child of God, and disciple of Christ, ought carefully and diligently to attend unto;

[and] bow thine ear to my understanding: listen attentively to those things which I have, and give an understanding of, even things divine and spiritual; the understanding of which is of the utmost moment and importance.

Ver. 2. *That thou mayest regard discretion*, etc.] Observe it; retain it in thine heart, as Aben Ezra adds, and use it; think, speak, and act discreetly, and so avoid the bad woman afterwards described: the Vulgate Latin version is, “that thou mayest keep the thoughts”; and so Gersom interprets the word; “good thoughts”, according to the Septuagint version; the thoughts of the heart are to be observed. A man of spiritual wisdom will take notice of them; evil thoughts, which lead to uncleanness, are to be repressed and kept in; good ones to be cherished and improved; wise and sagacious ones (such the word here used signifies) are to be attended to, as being of great advantage in the various affairs and business of life; and spiritual and evangelical wisdom helps to such thoughts, and directs to the observance and exercise of them;

and [that] thy lips may keep knowledge; may be able to speak of things worthy to be known, and communicate the knowledge of them to others; by which means useful knowledge will be kept and preserved, and be continued in successive ages; (see ^{<300>}Malachi 2:7); even the knowledge of God and of Christ, and of the Gospel and its doctrines; and which will be a means of preserving men, as from false doctrine, error, and heresy, so from profaneness and immorality; and particularly from the adulterous woman, next described.

Ver. 3. *For the lips of a strange woman drop [as] an honeycomb*, etc.] “*Mulsa dicta*”, “honey words”, as is Plautus’s^{f101} expression. The Septuagint and Arabic versions premise something here which is not in the Hebrew text,

“do not give heed to a wicked woman;”

and the Vulgate Latin version,

“to the fallacy of a woman:”

but there is no need to connect the words by such a supplement; since, as they lie, they give a reason why it was necessary to attend to wisdom and understanding, in order to act discreetly and speak knowingly; since there is so much danger of being drawn aside by a wicked woman, a lewd and adulterous one; the kisses of whose lips, her confabulations and songs, are as pleasing to the carnal senses of men as honey is sweet to the taste; she promises them a great deal of pleasure in her embraces, and in the enjoyment of her: so the poet^{f102} describes an agreeable voice to be sweeter than the honeycomb;

and her mouth [is] smoother than oil; her fair speeches, enticing words, and flattering fawning language, and amorous expressions, easily find their way and slide into the hearts of men, to prevail upon them to listen to her, and yield to her temptations. Gersom interprets this strange woman of the imaginative faculty; and Jarchi of heresy: it is applicable enough to the whore of Rome; who, by the blandishments of pomp and grandeur, and the allurements of wealth and riches, draws many into her idolatrous practices; which are spiritual adultery, signified by her golden cup, (^{<66704>}Revelation 17:4).

Ver. 4. *But her end is bitter as wormwood*, etc.] Which is opposed to the honeycomb her lips are said to drop; so that, as Juvenal says ^{f103}, “plus aloes quam mellis habet”: the end which she brings persons to, or the issue of complying with her, is bitterness; such as loss of credit, substance, and health, remorse of conscience, and fear of death, corporeal and eternal; (see ^{<20725>}Ecclesiastes 7:26);

sharp as a twoedged sword; which cuts every way; as committing sin with an harlot hurts both soul and body; and the reflection upon it is very cutting and distressing, and destroys all comfort and happiness. This is the reverse of her soothing and softening speech, which is as oil. Such also will be the sad case of the worshippers of the beast, or whore of Rome; who will gnaw their tongues for pain, and be killed with the twoedged sword that proceedeth out of the mouth of Christ, (^{<6660>}Revelation 16:10 19:15,21).

Ver. 5. *Her feet go down to death*, etc.] The ways in which she walks, and in which she leads others, issue oftentimes in corporeal death; and always in eternal death, if grace prevent not; and unless men are brought to a sense of sin, to repent of it and leave it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “the feet of imprudence” or “folly”, in opposition to wisdom; that is, the feet of the foolish woman, such an one the harlot is; and such is the whore of Rome, notwithstanding all her boasted knowledge and wisdom. And into perdition, or the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death, she goes herself, and hither she brings all that follow her idolatrous practices, (^{<66708>}Revelation 17:8 19:20 21:8);

her steps take hold on hell; make sure of it; hell is the certain portion of the harlot, and of all those that follow her lewd courses, unless reclaimed by the grace of God; and this will be the case of the worshippers of antichrist, or who give into the idolatries of the church of Rome, or commit

fornication with her, (^{f104}Revelation 14:9-11). Or, “her steps support hell”^{f104}; keep it up, and fill it with inhabitants; millions are carried into it by her means: or, reach unto hell; she stops not till she comes there, and her followers with her. The word may be rendered “the grave”, and may respect such whores who haunted burying places, and prostituted themselves among the graves; and were called from hence “bustuariae moechae”^{f105}.

Ver. 6. *Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life*, etc.] Consider and meditate which is the way to get out of her hands and ways, and escape death, and obtain eternal life; lest those she has drawn into her wicked course of life should be religiously inclined, and think of quitting such a course, and inquire after the way of life and salvation; and be weighing in their minds which is most eligible, to continue with her whose feet lead to death, or to take the path of life: to prevent all this, if possible,

her ways are movable: she appears in different shapes; changes her dress and habitation; makes use of a thousand arts to ensnare men, to entangle their affections, and retain them in her nets; she first puts them upon one thing, and then on another; she leads them into various mazes and labyrinths of sin, till they have lost all sense of religion, and sight of the path of life;

[that] thou canst not know [them]; her ways, arts, and devices. Or, “thou canst not know”^{f106}; that is, the way of life, or how to get out of her ways into that. Or, “thou knowest not”; where she goes, whither she leads thee, and what will be the end and issue of such a course of life. The Targum understands it, and so some other interpreters, of the harlot herself, paraphrasing the whole thus;

“in the way of life she walks not; her ways are unstable, and she knows not”

the way of life, nor where her ways will end; or, “cares not”^{f107} what becomes of her. And so, in like manner, the former part of the verse is understood and interpreted, “lest she ponder the path of life”^{f108}; or as others, “she does not ponder the path of life”^{f109}; The ways of the antichristian harlot are with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; and her chief care is to keep persons in ignorance, and from pondering the path of life or true religion, and to retain them in her idolatry, (^{s109}2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10).

Ver. 7. *Hear me now therefore, O ye children*, etc.] Since such is the character, this the wretched end, and these the ways of the adulterous woman; those that are young in years, and liable to be ensnared by her, should hear what Solomon, or Christ, here says, for their caution and instruction; and especially such who are, or profess themselves to be, the children of God and of Christ; and therefore, as dear children, should be followers of them, and not of an harlot;

and depart not from the words of my mouth; the warnings, directions, and exhortations given to avoid the whorish woman; the doctrines of Christ, the truths of the Gospel: these should not be forsaken, but abode by; and also his precepts and ordinances, which should be closely attended unto.

Ver. 8. *Remove thy way far from her*, etc.] The way of the mind, walk, and conversation; keep at the greatest distance from her; neither come where she is, nor look at her, nor converse with her; shun her, as one would the pest or a loathsome carcass; go a good way about rather than come near her, or be within sight of her, or so as to be in any danger of being ensnared by her;

and come not nigh the door of her house; not only not enter her chamber, but go not to her house; no, not over the threshold of the door, nor near the door; but avoid her house, as one would a house that has the plague in it. Men should not go in the way of temptation, trusting to their own strength; they may be entangled and overcome before they are aware; is good to keep out of the way of it. And as it becomes the children of Wisdom to wait at her gates, and at the posts of her door, to gain knowledge and understanding of divine things; so they should not go within the doors of false teachers, nor near them, nor admit them within theirs. It is a complaint against the church at Thyatira, that she suffered the woman Jezebel, the Romish harlot, to teach and seduce the servants of Christ, or connived at their attendance on her, (⁴⁰²¹Revelation 2:20).

Ver. 9. *Lest thou give thine honour unto others*, etc.] To strumpets, their children, attendants, servants, and friends; that is, either wealth or riches, which make men honourable; or their three, credit, and reputation, which are lost by keeping company with such persons; or the outward comeliness of the body, and inward rigour of the mind, which are impaired by adulterous practices. The Targum renders it, “thy strength”; and so the Syriac version, “thy strength of body”, which is enervated by such impurities; (see ⁴¹⁰³Proverbs 31:3); compare with this the kings of the earth

that commit fornication with the whore of Rome, giving their power and strength to the beast, (^{667B}Revelation 17:2,13). Jarchi's note is,

“lest thine heart has respect to other gods, to give them the glory of thine honour and praise;”

and so understands it not of corporeal but of spiritual adultery or idolatry: the Septuagint and Arabic versions are, “thy life”; which agrees with what follows;

and thy years unto the cruel; youthful years, the flower of age, consumed by the cruel lust of uncleanness, which preys upon and wastes both body and substance, and cuts them off in the prime of days; and deprives of years which otherwise, according to the course of nature, and in all probability, might be arrived unto: so harlots, in Plautus^{f110}, are said to sup the blood of men, and to deprive of goods, light, honour, and friends^{f111}. And the harlot herself may be here meant; who, when she has got what she can, has no pity on the man she has ruined, and even will not stick to take away his life upon occasion; as well as is the cause and means of the damnation of his soul: or the jealous husband of the adulterous woman, who will not spare the adulterer when taken by him; or her brethren, her relations and friends; or her other gallants and co-rivals, who, when they have opportunity, will avenge themselves; or the civil magistrate, who executes judgment without mercy on such delinquents, this being a sin punished with death. Jarchi interprets the “cruel” of the prince of hell, the devil; and so the Midrash of the angel of death. The character well agrees with the antichristian beast, the whore of Rome; who, by her sorceries and fornications, has destroyed millions of souls.

Ver. 10. *Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth*, etc.] The adulteress, her husband, children, friends, bawds, and such like persons she is concerned with; these share the wealth of the adulterer, abound with it, and live profusely on it, until he is stripped quite bare and destitute: or, “with thy strength”; (see Gill on “^{318B}Proverbs 5:9”). Jarchi interprets it of the prophets of Baal, that exact money by their falsehoods; it may well enough be applied to the fornicating merchants of Rome, who wax rich through the abundance of her delicacies and adulteries, (^{668B}Revelation 18:3); persons, strangers indeed to God and Christ, and all true religion;

and thy labours [be] in the house of a stranger; that is, wealth gotten by hard labour, with toil and sweat, grief and trouble, as the word used^{f112}

signifies; and yet, after all, not enjoyed by himself and his lawful wife and children, but by the strange woman and her accomplices, and spent in maintaining whores, bawds, and bastards; hence the fable of the Harpies eating and spoiling the victuals of Phineus, who were no other than harlots that consumed his substance^{f113}: and sometimes they are carried into a strange country, and possessed by foreigners. These are the wretched effects and miserable consequences of adultery, and therefore by all means to be shunned and avoided. Jarchi understands it of the house of idolatry, or an idol's temple; and everyone knows what vast riches are brought into the temples or churches of the Papists by idolatry.

Ver. 11. *And thou mourn at the last*, etc.] Or roar as a lion, as the word^{f114} signifies; (see ^{<01912>}Proverbs 19:12 20:2 28:15); expressing great distress of mind, horror of conscience, and vehement lamentations; and yet not having and exercising true repentance, but declaring a worldly sorrow, which worketh death. This mourning is too late, and not so much on account of the evil of sin as the evil that comes by it; it is when the man could have no pleasure from it and in it; when he has not only lost his substance by it, but his health also, the loss of both which must be very distressing: it is at the end of life, in his last days; in his old age, as the Syriac version, when he can no longer pursue his unclean practices;

when thy flesh and thy body are consumed; either in the time of old age and through it, as Gersom; or rather by diseases which the sin of uncleanness brings upon persons, which affixes the several parts of it; the brain, the blood, the liver, the back, and loins, and reins; and even all the parts of it, expressed by flesh and body. This may express the great tribulation such shall be cast into that commit adultery with the Romish Jezebel, (^{<01122>}Revelation 2:22).

Ver. 12. *And say, how have I hated instruction*, etc.] To live virtuously, and avoid the adulterous woman; this he says, as wondering at his stupidity, folly, and madness, that he should hate and abhor that which was so much his interest to have observed. Gersom interprets it of the instruction of the law; but it is much better to understand it of the instruction of the Gospel; which the carnal mind of man is enmity unto, and which they are so stupid as to abhor; when it is of so much usefulness to preserve from error and heresy, superstition, will worship, and idolatry;

and my heart despised reproof; for following the whorish woman; and which was secretly despised in the heart, and heartily too, if not expressed

with the mouth: it is one part of the Gospel ministry to reprove for false doctrine and false worship, though it generally falls under the contempt of the erroneous and idolatrous.

Ver. 13. *And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers*, etc.] Parents, tutors, masters, and ministers of the word; neither regarded the advice of parents, nor the instructions of tutors, nor the commands of masters, nor the sermons of ministers: these are all lost on some persons; they are proof against them all; these make no impressions upon them, and are of no use to them;

nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! or to my masters, as the Targum and Vulgate Latin version; turned away the ear from them, stopped it to them, and would not hear what they had to say; at least would not receive it, and act according to it.

Ver. 14. *I was almost in all evil*, etc.] Scarce a sin but he was guilty of; contempt of private and public instructions, the instructions of parents and ministers of the Gospel, and following lewd women, commonly lead to the commission of all other sins, even the most atrocious. Some understand this, not of the evil of sin, but of the evil of punishment; and that the sense is, that there is scarce any calamity, distress, or misery, that a man can be in, but his profaneness and lewdness had brought him into; and he was just upon the brink of hell itself: and so Jarchi paraphrases it,

“there was but a step between me and hell.”

Aben Ezra observes, that the past is put for the future, “I shall be”; and then the meaning is, in a little or in a short time I shall be in complete misery; and so they are the words of one under consciousness of sin, despairing of mercy;

in the midst of the congregation and the assembly; that is, either he despised and neglected the instructions which were given in a public manner; or he committed all the evil he did openly; not only in company with wicked men, which he frequented, but even in the presence and before the people of God; yea, before the civil magistrates, the great sanhedrim, which is sometimes designed by the last word here used: or when he was in the house of God, attending public worship, his eyes were full of adultery, and his heart of impure lusts; and neither place, service, nor people of God, where he was, commanded any awe and reverence in him, nor in the least restrained his unclean thoughts and wanton desires; and which is

mentioned as an aggravation of guilt. Or else the sense is, that his calamities and miseries were as public as his crimes; he was made a public example of, and all the people were witnesses of it; which served to spread his infamy, and make his punishment the more intolerable: both the sins and punishment of those that commit fornication with the whore of Rome will be public and manifest, (~~688B~~ Revelation 18:5 14:10).

Ver. 15. *Drink waters out of thine own cistern*, etc.] Arguments being used to dissuade from conversation with an adulterous woman, taken from the disgrace, diseases, poverty, and distress of mind on reflection, it brings a man to; the wise man proceeds to direct to marriage, as a proper antidote against it: take a wife and cleave to her, and enjoy all the pleasures and comforts of a marriage state. As every man formerly had his own cistern for the reception of water for his own use, (~~128B~~ 2 Kings 18:31); so every man should have his own wife, and but one: and as drinking water quenches thirst, and allays heat; so the lawful enjoyments of the marriage bed quench the thirst of appetite, and allay the heat of lust; for which reason the apostle advises men to marry and not burn, (~~400B~~ 1 Corinthians 7:9); and a man that is married should be content with his own wife, and not steal waters out of another cistern. The allusion may be to a law, which, Clemens of Alexandria^{f115} says, Plato had from the Hebrews; which enjoined husbandmen not to take water from others to water their lands, till they themselves had dug into the earth, called virgin earth, and found it dry and without water;

and running waters out of thine own well; the pure, chaste, and innocent pleasures of the marriage state, are as different from the embraces of an harlot, who is compared to a deep ditch and a narrow pit, (~~128B~~ Proverbs 23:27); as clear running waters of a well or fountain from the dirty waters of a filthy puddle; (see ~~3097B~~ Proverbs 9:17). Some interpret these words, and what follows, of persons enjoying with contentment the good things of life they have for the support of themselves and families; and of a liberal communication of them to the relief of proper objects; but not to spend their substance on harlots. Jarchi understands by the “cistern”, the law of Moses: but it may be better applied to the Scriptures in general, from whence all sound doctrine flows, to the comfort and refreshment of the souls of men; and from whence all doctrine ought to be fetched, and not elsewhere.

Ver. 16. *Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad*, etc.] Or “shall abound”, as the Targum; that is, streams of water from fountains; which Aben Ezra interprets of a multitude of children, namely, that are lawfully begotten: the “fountains” are the man and his wife in lawful marriage; the streams are their offspring lawfully procreated by them; which may be said to be “dispersed abroad”, when being grown up they are disposed of in marriage in other families, and so become fountains to others, and public blessings;

[and] rivers of waters in the streets; meaning a numerous posterity as before; and such as a man is not ashamed publicly to own, whereas he is ashamed of such as are unlawfully begotten; but these are to his honour in the streets, and for public good; and particularly to those to whom they are given in marriage; (see ^{<2380>}Isaiah 48:1). Jarchi interprets this of multiplying disciples, and of teaching them the law publicly, and of getting a name thereby; but it might be interpreted much better of spreading the doctrines of the Gospel, and of the public ministry and profession of that, for the good of others.

Ver. 17. *Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee.*] Or “they shall be thine own”^{f116}, as the Targum; meaning not the cistern, the well, or the wife, but the fountains and rivers, or the children; by a man’s cleaving to his own wife, who is a chaste and virtuous woman, he is satisfied that the children he has by her are his own, and not another’s; whereas if he has to do with a common harlot, it is uncertain whose children they are, she prostituting herself to many: it may be applied to the peculiar possession and steadfast retention of the truths of the Gospel, in opposition to all divers and strange doctrines propagated by others; (see ^{<4125>}Revelation 2:25 3:11).

Ver. 18. *Let thy fountain be blessed*, etc.] Thy wife; make her happy by keeping to her and from others; by behaving in a loving, affable, and respectful manner to her; by living comfortably with her, and providing well for her and her children: or reckon her a happiness, a blessing that God has bestowed; or

“thy fountain shall be blessed,”

as the Targum; that is, with a numerous offspring, which was always reckoned a blessedness, and was generally the happiness of virtuous women, when harlots were barren;

and rejoice with the wife of thy youth; taken to be a wife in youth, and lived with ever since; do not despise her, nor divorce her, even in old age, but delight in her company now as ever; carry it not morosely and churlishly to her, but express a joy and pleasure in her; see (²⁰⁰⁰Ecclesiastes 9:9 ³⁰²⁴Malachi 2:14, 15). Jarchi interprets this of the law learned in youth; but it might be much better interpreted of the pure apostolic church of Christ, “the beulah”, to whom her sons are married, (²³⁰⁴Isaiah 62:4,5); to whom they should cleave with delight and pleasure, and not follow the antichristian harlot.

Ver. 19. [*Let her be as*] *the loving hind and pleasant roe*, etc.] That is, the wife of youth; let her always appear to thee as amiable and lovely as these creatures are; or let her be loved by thee as these are by princes and great men^{f117}, who used to keep them tame, keep them clean, wash, comb them, and adorn them, and play with them; or rather, as these creatures are loving to their mates, let thy love be single, chaste, pure, and fervent, as theirs; (see ²¹¹³Song of Solomon 2:9,17 8:14). The pure church of Christ is very different from the apostate church of Rome; the one is compared to a loving and lovely creature, innocent and chaste; the other to a cruel and savage beast, (⁶⁰⁰Revelation 13:1,2,11);

let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; even as it were to be inebriated therewith, and so as not to seek out elsewhere to strange women for satisfaction; (see ²¹¹³Song of Solomon 1:13). The church’s breasts are the ordinances of the Gospel, which are said to be like young roes, and afford great pleasure, satisfaction, and refreshment to true believers, (²¹⁴⁵Song of Solomon 4:5 7:3);

and be thou ravished always with her love; greatly delighted with it, both in loving her and being loved by her; and let this always continue in old age as well as in youth; or now as well as formerly, and not for a short time, but for continuance: or, “err thou always in her love”^{f118}; if any error is committed by thee, let it be on the side of love, in loving her too much; better err in loving her than in loving a strange woman.

Ver. 20. *And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman*, etc.] Or “err with her”^{f119}; after all those inconveniences and miseries that follow upon a conversation with a harlot, and all those advantages of a marriage state set before thee; why wilt thou be, so foolish and mad as to have a fondness for an harlot and dote upon her, and neglect entering into a marriage state, or forsake the wife of youth? and yet though things are so

clearly stated and aptly represented, and the expostulation made in the most tender and affectionate manner; it is suggested as if after all it would not be attended unto, but a harlot be preferred to a wife of youth, a filthy beast to a loving hind, and dirty puddles of water in a ditch to running streams from a well or fountain;

and embrace the bosom of a stranger? that is not thy wife; a description of unlawful love and impure embraces, which are dissuaded from.

Ver. 21. *For the ways of a man [are] before the eyes of the Lord,* etc.]

Both good and bad; the ways of a chaste and virtuous man, who cleaves to his own wife and shuns the harlot, which are approved of by the Lord; and the ways of a lewd man, all the impure thoughts, desires, and contrivances of his mind, and all the steps he takes to commit lewdness, and all the filthy actions he is guilty of, these are all open and naked to the omniscient God: the adulterer seeks the twilight, and flatters himself with secrecy, not considering that the eye of God is upon him; there are many, that, were their filthy actions known to men, they would be ashamed of them; and this consideration greatly deters from them, and puts them upon secret ways of committing them; much more should the consideration of the divine omniscience weigh with them to avoid them; which is the argument here made use of;

and he pondereth all his goings; he not only sees them, but takes notice of them, and observes them, and ponders them in his mind, and lays them up there, in order to bring to an account for them hereafter; yea, he weighs them in the balance of justice, and will proportion the punishment unto them, according to the rules of it; when it must go ill with those that follow such lewd practices, (^{<8104>}Hebrews 13:4 ^{<6212>}Revelation 22:12,15).

Ver. 22. *His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself,* etc.] As in a snare or net, as Gersom observes; in which the adulterer is so entangled that he cannot extricate himself; he may fancy that when he grows old his lusts will be weakened, and he shall be able to get clear of them, and have repentance for them, but he will find himself mistaken; he will become but more and more hardened by them and confirmed in them, and will have neither will nor power to repent of them, and shake off those shackles with which he is bound: and it may be understood of the guilt and punishment of his sins; that the horrors of a guilty conscience shall seize him, there will be no need of any others to arrest him, these will do that office; or diseases

shall come upon him for his sins, and bring him to the dust of death, and so to everlasting destruction;

and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins; which he has been all his life committing and twisting together, and made as it were cords of, which by constant practice become strong as such; with the guilt of which he is bound as a malefactor, and will be brought to justice, being reserved in these cords, as the angels that sinned in their chains, unto the judgment of the great day; the phrase denotes the strength of sin, the impotency of man to get rid of it, and the sure and inevitable ruin that comes by it.

Ver. 23. *He shall die without instruction*, etc.] Into the evil of sin, and the danger he is in, and so without repentance for it; for instruction is the means of repentance, and productive of it when blessed, (²⁸¹⁹Jeremiah 31:19); but it is but just that those who have hated and rejected it in health and life, that when they come to die should have none given them about the evil of sin, the danger of their state, and the way of salvation; or rather “because of instruction”^{f120}; because they would not bear and receive, but neglected, rejected, and despised it, so Aben Ezra and Ben Gersom; or “without correction”^{f121}, or discipline and amendment by it;

and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray; being left to the exceeding great folly of his mind, he shall continue to go astray as he has done from God and his good ways, from the precepts of his law, and the rules of his word; going after his own heart’s lusts, which will drown him in perdition. This “folly” may be understood either of his fornication and adultery, which is egregious folly; or of his imagining that he should be able to repent of sin when he pleased, and free himself from the bondage of it, and escape the punishment due unto it.

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 6

In this chapter the wise man dissuades from rash suretyship; exposes the sin of idleness; describes a wicked man; makes mention of seven things hateful to God; exhorts to attend to parental instructions and precepts, and cautions against adultery. Suretyship is described, (^{2106E}Proverbs 6:1); and represented as a snare and a net, in which men are taken, (^{2106D}Proverbs 6:2); and advice is given what to do in such a case, for safety in it, and deliverance from it, (^{2106B}Proverbs 6:3-5); The sin of slothfulness is exposed, by observing the industry of the ant, (^{2106B}Proverbs 6:6-8); by expostulating with the sluggard for his continuance in sloth, and by mimicking him, (^{2106B}Proverbs 6:9,10); and by the poverty it brings upon him, (^{2106I}Proverbs 6:11). Then a naughty wicked man is described, by his mouth, eyes, feet, fingers, and heart, whose ruin is sudden and inevitable, (^{2106I}Proverbs 6:11-15). The seven things hateful to God are particularly named, (^{2106G}Proverbs 6:16-19). And next the exhortation in some preceding chapters is reassumed, to attend to the instructions of parents; which will be found ornamental, pleasant, and useful, (^{2106I}Proverbs 6:20-23). Especially to preserve from the lewd woman cautioned against, (^{2106F}Proverbs 6:24,25); whose company is dissuaded from; on account of the extreme poverty and distress she brings persons to, and even danger of life, (^{2106G}Proverbs 6:26); from the unavoidable ruin such come into, (^{2106Z}Proverbs 6:27-29); from the sin of uncleanness being greater than that of theft, (^{2106D}Proverbs 6:30,31); from the folly the adulterer betrays; from the destruction of his soul, and the disgrace he brings on himself, (^{2106Z}Proverbs 6:32,33); and from the rage and irreconcilable offence of the husband of the adulteress, (^{2106B}Proverbs 6:34,35).

Ver. 1. *My son, if thou be surety for thy friend*, etc.] To another; hast engaged thyself by promise or bond, or both, to pay a debt for him, if he is not able, or if required; or hast laid thyself under obligation to any, to see the debt of another paid;

[*if*] *thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger*; or “to” him^{f122}; whom thou knowest not, and to whom thou owest nothing; and hast given him

thine hand upon it, as well as thy word and bond, that what such an one owes him shall be paid; a gesture used in suretyship for the confirmation of it, (~~3078~~ Proverbs 17:18 22:26); or, “for a stranger”,^{f123} And the sense is, either if thou art become bound for a friend of thine, and especially if for a stranger thou knowest little or nothing of, this is a piece of rashness and weakness; or, as Gersom, if thou art a surety to thy friend for a stranger, this also is a great inadvertency and oversight. It is a rash and inconsiderate entering into suretyship that is here cautioned against; doing it without inquiring into, and having sufficient knowledge of the person engaged for; and without considering whether able to answer the obligation, if required, without hurting a man’s self and family; otherwise suretyship may lawfully be entered into, and good be done by it, and no hurt to the surety himself and family. Jarchi interprets it of the Israelites engaging themselves to the Lord at Sinai, to keep his commandments.

Ver. 2. *Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth*, etc.] Got into a snare out of which an escape is not easy; art no longer free, and thine own man, but under obligation to pay the debt if required; by the verbal agreement made and confirmed by striking hands, and this before witnesses;

thou art taken with the words of thy mouth; as in a net, and held fast therein and thereby, and cannot get loose without paying the debt, if the debtor does not, or without the leave of the creditor.

Ver. 3. *Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself*, etc.] Take the following advice, as the best that can be given in such circumstances, in order to be freed from such an obligation, or to be safe and easy under it;

when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; or,

“because or seeing thou art fallen into the hand of thy friend,”

as the Targum; or

“though thou art,” etc.

as Aben Ezra; which may be understood either of the creditor to whom a man is bound, or of the debtor for whom he is bound, or of both; for a surety is in the hands or power of both: he is in the hands of the creditor, who may demand payment of the debt of him; and he is in the hands of the debtor, who, if a careless or crafty and deceitful man, may leave him to the payment of it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are,

“for thou art come into the hands of evil men for thy friend;”

and the Syriac version,

“seeing for thy friend thou art fallen into the hands of thine enemy;”

and therefore must make the best of it thou canst, and in the following way:

go, humble thyself; that is, to the creditor, prostrate thyself before him; lie down upon the ground to be trodden on, as the word^{f124} signifies; fall down on thine knees, and entreat him to discharge thee from the bond, or give longer time for payment, if up; for thou art in his hands, and there is no carrying it with a high hand or a haughty spirit to him; humility, and not haughtiness, is most likely to be serviceable in such a case;

and make sure thy friend; for whom thou art become a surety, as the Syriac and Arabic versions add; solicit him, as the former of these versions render it; stimulate him, as the Septuagint; stir him up, urge him to pay off the debt quickly, and discharge the bond, or give thee security and indemnity from it. Or, “magnify thy friend”^{f125}; that is, to the creditor; speak of him as a very able and responsible man, and as an honest and faithful one, that will pay in due time. Some render it “magnify”, and speak well of the debtor to thy friend, which may please and appease him: or, “multiply thy friends”^{f126}; get as many as thou canst to intercede for thee, and get thee discharged from the obligation by some means or another; to this purpose Jarchi.

Ver. 4. *Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.*] Until the above things are done; which denotes of what consequence and importance they are; and that persons in such circumstances should not be careless, dilatory, and unconcerned; but should use great diligence, and leave no stone unturned, or method untried, to extricate themselves; (see ~~4:13~~ Psalm 132:4).

Ver. 5. *Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand [of the hunter],* etc.] As such a creature, which is very swift, when it is got into the hand of the hunter, will strive and struggle to get out; so should a man try all ways and means to get out of his suretyship engagements, especially when he finds himself liable to danger by it; this he should do “immediately” and “out of hand”^{f127}, as the phrase here used sometimes signifies with the Jewish writers;

and as a bird from the hand of the fowler; another metaphor, signifying the same thing.

Ver. 6. *Go to the ant, thou sluggard*, etc.] That art become surety for another, and got into a snare and net, and yet takest no pains to get out. Or this may be directed, not to the surety, but the debtor; who, through his slothfulness, has contracted debts, and uses no industry to be in a capacity to pay them. Or, it may be, this has no connection with the former; but the wise man proceeds to a new subject, and to dissuade from idleness, which brings ruin on families, and leads to all sin; and, for the instruction of idle and slothful men, proposes the example of the ant, and sends them to it to learn industry of it^{f128};

consider her ways; what diligence and industry it uses in providing its food; which, though a small, weak, feeble creature, yet will travel over flints and stones, climb trees, enter into towers, barns, cellars, places high and low, in search of food; never hinder, but help one another in carrying their burdens; prepare little cells to put their provisions in, and are so built as to secure them from rain; and if at any time their corn is wet, they bring out and dry it, and bite off the ends of it, that it may not grow. These, with others, are taken notice of by Frantzius^{f129}; and some of them by Gersom on the place;

and be wise; learn wisdom of it, and be wiser than that, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions: this is a mortification of proud men, that would be reckoned wise, to be sent to so despicable a creature to get wisdom from.

Ver. 7. *Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler*.] None to guide and direct her what to do; nor any to overlook her, to see that she does aright, or to oblige her to work, and keep her to it; nor any to call her to an account, and correct her for doing amiss; and nevertheless diligent and industrious, doing everything of herself, by the instinct of nature, readily and willingly: and yet how slothful are men; who, besides the dictates of nature, reason, and conscience, have parents, masters, ministers, and magistrates, to guide, direct, exhort, instruct, and enforce! so Aristotle^{f130} says of the ant, that it is *αγαρχος*, without any ruler or governor.

Ver. 8. *Provideth her meat in the summer*, etc.] Against the winter, of which it is mindful, when it never comes out of its place, having in the summer time got a sufficiency laid up in cells for its use: she toils in the heat of summer to get in her provision for the winter, being sensible that

nothing is to be gotten then; she works at it night and day while the season lasts; so diligent is it in laying up its stores at the proper opportunity^{f131};

[and] gathereth her food in the harvest; the time when corn is ripe, and is shed on the earth; this it gathereth, and lays up in its repositories against a time of need. The seeds it gathers and lays up; it bites off the chit or bud end of them, that they may not grow, as Pliny^{f132} and others observe, but be a winter store; hence its name in Hebrew is “nemalah”, from “namal”, “to cut off”; it being done by biting. Yea, according to Aelianus^{f133}, it seems to have some sense of futurity with respect to famine, which being near, it will work exceeding hard to lay up food, fruits, and seed; and, according to Virgil^{f134} and others, it seems to presage old age, and therefore provides against it. An instruction this to work, while persons are in health, and have youth on their side; that they may have not only a sufficiency for present use, but to lay up against a time of sickness and old age. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add,

“or go to the bee, and learn what a worker she is, and what an admirable work she performs; whose labours kings and private persons use for health: she is desirable to all, and famous; and though weak in strength, honouring wisdom is advanced.”

But this is not in the Hebrew text; but perhaps being written in the margin of some copy of the Septuagint as a parallel instance, was by some unskilful copier put into the text of the Greek version, from whence the Arabic version has taken it; it crept in very early, for Clemens of Alexandria makes mention of it^{f135}.

Ver. 9. *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?* etc.] Or “lie”^{f136} in bed, indulging in sloth and ease; while the industrious ant is busy in getting in its provisions, even by moonlight, as naturalists^{f137} observe;

when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? and be about thy lawful calling? doing the duties of religion, and the business of life; providing things honest in the sight of all men; things necessary for thyself and family, and wherewith to do good to others; exercising a conscience void of offence both to God and men. Time should not be slept away, to the neglect of the affairs of life, nor of the concerns of the immortal soul and a future state; men should not be slothful in things temporal or spiritual: whatever may be the proper time to awake and arise out of sleep in a morning, which seems to be according to a man’s circumstances, health and business; it is always

high time for the sinner to awake out of the sleep of sin, and arise from the dead; and for the drowsy saint to arise out of his lethargy and carnal security.

Ver. 10. [*Yet a little sleep, a little slumber*, etc.] Or, “little sleeps, little slumbers”^{f138}. These are the words of the sluggard, in answer to the call of him to awake and arise, desiring he might not be disturbed, but be suffered to sleep on longer: there is a very beautiful climax or gradation in the words, aptly expressing the disposition and actions of a sluggard; he first desires a “few sleeps” more, some sound sleeps one after another; which is quite agreeable to his character: and if he cannot be allowed them, then he requests a “few slumbers” at least, some dozings, till he can get himself thoroughly awake; and if these cannot be granted, yet he prays however that this might be admitted,

a little folding of the hands to sleep; or, “to lie down”^{f139}; a few tossings and tumblings upon the bed more, with his hands folded about his breast; a sleeping gesture, and the posture of sluggards. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “a little thou wilt embrace the breast with the hands”; and the Syriac version, “and a little thou wilt put thine hand upon thy breast”. The Jewish commentators understand this as a direction and command to sleep and slumber but little, since a little sleep is sufficient for nature; or otherwise poverty will come, etc. but the former sense is best.

Ver. 11. *So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth*, etc.] Either swiftly and suddenly, as a traveller makes haste to get to his journey’s end, and comes upon his family or friends at an unawares; or though he moves gradually, by slow paces and silent steps, yet surely: and so it signifies that poverty should come upon the sluggard very quickly, and before he was aware: and though it might come by degrees, yet it would certainly come;

and thy want as an armed man; or, “thy wants as a man of shield”^{f140}: denoting many wants that should come rushing in one upon another, like a man armed with shield and buckler; appearing with great terror and force, not to be resisted. It denotes the unavoidableness of being brought into penury and want by sloth, and the terribleness of such a condition. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, add,

“but if thou art not slothful, thy harvest shall come as a fountain (as the inundation of a fountain, Arabic); but want shall flee as an evil racer (as an evil man, Arabic; far from thee, Vulgate Latin):”

but this is not in the Hebrew text.

Ver. 12. *A naughty person, a wicked man*, etc.] Or, “a man of Belial, a man of iniquity”^{f141}. The former signifies an unprofitable man, a man good for nothing, that is of no use to God or man; or one that is lawless, that has thrown off the yoke of the law, and will not be subject to it; Belial is the name of the devil; and here it may design such as are his children, and will do his lusts: the latter phrase signifies one that is wholly given up to work wickedness. The characters well agree with the **ανομος**, the lawless one, the man of sin and son of perdition, antichrist, (~~510B~~2 Thessalonians 2:3,8).
Who

walketh with a froward mouth; speaking perverse things, things contrary to the light of nature and reason, to law and Gospel; uttering lies, and deceit, and blasphemies against God and man; to which he has used himself, and in which he continues, as the word “walketh” signifies: so antichrist has a mouth opened in blasphemies against God and his saints, (~~610B~~ Revelation 13:5,6).

Ver. 13. *He winketh with his eyes*, etc.] Not through natural infirmity, but purposely and with design; with one of his eyes, as Aben Ezra, as is usual with such persons: it is the air and gesture of a sneering and deceitful man, who gives the wink to some of his friends, sneering at the weakness of another in company; or as signifying to them some secret design of his against another, which he chooses not to declare in any other way;

he speaketh with his feet; the motions of the feet have a language; the stamping of the feet expresses rage; here it seems to intend the giving of a him to another, by privately pressing his foot with his, when he should be silent or should speak, or do this or the other thing he would have him do;

he teacheth with his fingers; by stretching them out or compressing them; and so showing either scorn and contempt^{f142}, or rage and fury. The whole of it seems to design the secret, cunning, artful ways, which wicked men have to convey their meanings to one another, without being understood by other persons; they have a language to themselves, which they express by the motions of their eyes, feet, and fingers: and this character of art and cunning, dissimulation and deceit, fitly agrees with the man of sin, (~~510D~~2 Thessalonians 2:10 ~~631B~~ Revelation 13:11). So mimics are said to speak with their hands; some have been famous in this way^{f143}.

Ver. 14. *Frowardness [is] in his heart*, etc.] Or perverse things; evil habits and principles of sin; all manner of wickedness, errors and heresies; things contrary to right reason, repugnant to the will and law of God, and the reverse of sound doctrine; all evil thoughts and evil things; (see ~~4059~~ Matthew 15:19);

he deviseth mischief continually; against his neighbours, and especially against good men; he is continually planning schemes, contriving methods, ways, and means, how to disturb, distress, and ruin men; being a true child of Belial, or of the devil, his heart is the forge where he is continually framing wickedness in one shape or another; and the ground which he is always ploughing up and labouring at to bring forth sin and wickedness, and with which it is fruitful;

he soweth discord; or “strifes”^{f144}: the Syriac version adds, “between two”; which Jarchi interprets between a man and his Maker; rather between a man and his neighbour; between one friend and another; between husband and wife, parents and children, brethren and brethren, magistrates and subjects; between kings and princes of the earth in which sort of work the man of sin, antichrist, has been very busy. The Targum is, “he casteth out strifes”, as firebrands among men. The words in the Hebrew text are, “he sendeth out discord”, or “strife”^{f145}; these are the messengers sent out by him to make mischief.

Ver. 15. *Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly*, etc.] Unthought of and unexpected: he that deviseth mischief to others secretly shall have no warning of his own ruin, nor time and means of preventing it; the destruction of antichrist will be sudden, and of all wicked men at the coming of Christ, (~~5188~~ 1 Thessalonians 5:3 ~~6887~~ Revelation 18:7,8);

suddenly shall he be broken without remedy; or, “and there shall be no healing”^{f146}: his bones will be broken to pieces, and there will be no cure for him; or he shall be like an earthen vessel, which, when broke, cannot be put together again. The ruin of wicked men is sudden, inevitable, and irreparable; so antichrist will “come to his end, and none shall help him”, (~~2715~~ Daniel 11:45).

Ver. 16. *These six [things] doth the Lord hate*, etc.] That is, the six following, which are all to be found in a man of Belial, a wicked man before described. There are other things besides these that God hates, and indeed more so; as sins against the first table, which more immediately

strike at his being, horror, and glory; these being such as are against the second table, but are mentioned, as more especially appearing in the character of the above person; and must be hateful to God, as contrary to his nature, will, and law;

yea, seven [are] an abomination unto him; or, “the abomination of his soul”^{f147}; what his soul abhors, or he abhors from his very heart: meaning not seven others, but one more along with the six, which make seven; a like way of speaking, see in (²⁸⁰⁵Proverbs 30:15,18,29 ⁸⁰⁹Job 5:19). Nor is the word “abomination” to be restrained to the “seventh”, or “hatred” to the “sixth”; but they are all to be supposed to be hateful and abominable to the Lord; though some think the cardinal number is put for the ordinal, “seven” for the “seventh”; as if the seventh, which is sowing discord among brethren, was of all the most abominable, (²¹⁶⁹Proverbs 6:19); it being what was last mentioned in the character of the wicked man, (²⁰⁶⁴Proverbs 6:14); and which seems to have given occasion to, and for the sake of which this enumeration is made.

Ver. 17. *A proud look*, etc.] Or, “eyes elated”^{f148}; scorning to look down upon others; or looking upon them with disdain; or reckoning them as unworthy to be looked upon, having an high opinion of their own worth and merit. Pride is the first of the hateful things mentioned; it being the first sin committed, as is probable, the sin of the angels, and of the first man; and is a predominant evil in human nature, and is directly opposite to God and to his nature, and against which he sets himself; for “he resisteth the proud”, (³⁰¹⁶James 4:6); the pride of the heart shows itself in the eyes, or by the looks of a man; Gersom says, the phrase denotes impudence and haughtiness;

a lying tongue; that is the second of the hateful things; a tongue speaking falsehood, knowingly and willingly, with an intention to deceive others; to hurt the character of a neighbour, or to flatter a friend, is a most detestable evil; it ought to be so to men, it must be so to God, who is a God of truth: nor is there anything in which a man more resembles the devil, who is the father of lies;

and hands that shed innocent blood; human blood; and that of persons who have not been guilty of any capital sin, for which they ought to die by the laws of God or men, and yet shed or poured out as common water; such hands must be defiled, and such men must be hateful to God, they destroying his image, and being like to the devil, who was a murderer from

the beginning. These “three” sins are plainly to be seen in the son of Belial, antichrist, who exalts himself above all that is called God, the kings and princes of the earth; he and his followers speak lies in hypocrisy; and is the whore that is drunk with the blood of the saints, (^{<3004>}2 Thessalonians 2:4 ^{<5042>}1 Timothy 4:2 ^{<6676>}Revelation 17:6).

Ver. 18. *An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations*, etc.] Or, “thoughts of wickedness”^{f149}; which are framed and formed in the heart: and this being the source and fountain of all wickedness, is placed in the midst of these hateful and abominable things; (see Gill on “^{<3064>}Proverbs 6:14”); evil thoughts and designs, both against God and men, are intended, which are forged and fabricated in the wicked heart of man; and may respect the depths of Satan in the antichristian beast of Rome, (^{<6024>}Revelation 2:24);

feet that be swift in running to mischief; to commit all manner of sin with greediness, especially murder; (see ^{<3016>}Proverbs 1:16).

Ver. 19. *A false witness [that] speaketh lies*, etc.] Or, “that speaketh lies, [even] a false witness”^{f150}; and so this is distinguished from a lying tongue, the second of these evils: this is the sin of bearing false witness against one’s neighbour, a breach of the eighth command. It may be rendered, “he that bloweth lies”^{f151}; that raises lies, and spreads them abroad, and swears to them, to the damage of others. This makes the sixth; and the seventh follows,

and him that soweth discord among brethren; whether in a natural relation, or in a civil society, or in a religious community.

Ver. 20. *My son, keep thy father’s commandment*, etc.] These are not the words of David to Solomon continued from (^{<3004>}Proverbs 4:4); but the words of Solomon to his son; and not to his son only, in a strict natural relation, but to everyone that came to him for and put himself under his instruction; and to everyone that stood in such a relation to a religious father; for not the divine Being, the Father of all, is here meant, according to some Jewish writers; though the commandment no doubt is the commandment of God taught by godly parents; or such a system of precepts that is founded upon and agrees unto the revealed will of God, and which being so should be laid up and kept in the heart, and not forgotten; and should be observed and attended to and obeyed throughout the whole course of life, as if it was the commandment of God himself; and

indeed it is no other than that which pious parents train up their children in the knowledge of, instil into them, and urge upon them the observance of;

and forsake not the law of thy mother; the same as before, and which is mentioned to show that the same respect is to be had to a mother as to a father, the commandment and law of them being the same, and they standing in the same relation; which yet children are apt to make a difference in, and while they stand in awe of their father and his precepts, slight their mother and her directions, which ought not to be. Some understand this of the congregation of Israel, as some Jewish writers; and others of the church of God, the mother of us all.

Ver. 21. *Bind them continually upon thine heart*, etc.] Not upon the head or arm, as the words of the law were to be bound, (^{<ARB>}Deuteronomy 6:3); to which there seems to be an allusion; and which may confirm the sense of the words given, that this respects the law of God itself, and the precepts of it, instructed in by parents; but they should be bound upon the heart, and have an abiding place in the understanding, affections, memory, and will;

[and] tie them about thy neck; as an ornament, instead of a necklace of pearl, or chains of gold; they should be so far from being thought burdensome and troublesome, that they should be reckoned comely and graceful; (see ^{<ARB>}Proverbs 1:9 3:3,22).

Ver. 22. *When thou goest, it shall lead thee*, etc.] The law of God taught by parents; this directs man in the path of duty and business of life; teaches him what way to shun, and which to walk in; it leads out of the paths of sin, and into the way in which he should go, which is most conducive to his good, and to the glory of God; it will lead him safely, so that he shall not stumble, (^{<ARB>}Proverbs 3:3);

when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; from terrifying dreams, evil spirits, dangers by fire or thieves; one that observes it conscientiously may lie down and sleep, secure of the guardianship of divine Providence, and not fear any evil; or “shall watch over thee”^{f152} in the night season;

and [when] thou awakest, it shall talk with thee; familiarly; and instruct what to do, and how to behave the day following; or “it shall go out with thee”^{f153}, into the fields for a morning’s walk, and assist in meditation. Jarchi interprets this of sleeping by death, and of awaking at the resurrection of the dead.

Ver. 23. *For the commandment [is] a lamp*, etc.] The law of God is a lamp or candle to see to work by and to walk by; it enlightens the eyes and directs the feet, and makes working more pleasant, and walking more comfortable; and indeed wit, about it a man knows not rightly what to do or where he should walk, or where he is walking; (see ^{<B116>}Psalm 119:105);

and the law [is] light; it makes things clear and manifest, what is right and what is wrong; it enlightens the eyes of the understanding, whereby persons come to see both their sin and their duty; and it directs them to avoid the one and do the other; (see ^{<D118>}Psalm 19:8);

and reproofs of instruction [are] the way life; kind reproofs given by parents agreeable to the word of God, which instruct what should be shunned and what should be performed, when attended to, put men in the way of an honourable and useful life; and are the means of preserving them from a scandalous and useless one.

Ver. 24. *To keep thee from the evil woman*, etc.] This is one use of the profit arising from attending to the instructions of parents, and to the law of God, as taught by them; to preserve from fornication and adultery, one of its precepts expressly forbidding adultery and all corporeal uncleanness; and the whole of it directing to an observance of all duties respecting God and our neighbour, which requires diligence and industry, and prevents idleness, that inlet to all sin, and especially to uncleanness^{f154};

from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman; the same with the evil woman, the lewd and adulterous one; (see ^{<D116>}Proverbs 2:16 5:3). Jarchi interprets this of idolatry; the character well agrees with the idolatrous church of Rome, or antichrist, represented by a whore, (^{<G170>}Revelation 17:1,2,5); as this woman is called “the woman of evil”^{f155}, for so it may be rendered, one very evil, given up and abandoned to sin; so antichrist is called “the man of sin”, (^{<D118>}2 Thessalonians 2:3); and as this woman is said to have the “smoothness of a strange tongue”^{f156}, as the words may be translated, and are by the Targum; so the religion of this false church is delivered in a strange language the people understand not, by which they are kept in ignorance and deception; now the word of God read and explained in the mother tongue, and especially the Gospel part of it, the doctrine of wisdom, is a means of preserving persons from the errors and heresies, superstition and idolatry, of the church of Rome, and from being carried away with their false glosses, and gaudy worship, and all its deceivable ways of unrighteousness.

Ver. 25. *Lust not after her beauty in thine heart*, etc.] Do not look upon it with the eye, nor dwell upon it in the thought; the one will lead on to and kindle last in the heart, and the other will cherish it and blow it up into a flame; and lust thus conceived and nourished in the heart is no other than committing adultery, (⁴¹⁵³Matthew 5:28);

neither let her take thee with her eyelids; let her not take thee from instruction with them, so Aben Ezra, from attending to that; or let her not take thy wisdom from thee, so Jarchi; or rather let her not take thee as in a net, with the sparkling of her eyes, with the wanton and amorous glances of them; so the Syriac version, “let her not captivate thee”, etc. which applied to the antichristian church, may signify the outward pomp and grandeur of it, its pretensions to antiquity, to the apostolic see, to infallibility, miracles, great devotion, etc. which are taking to men, and are the Circean cup with which she bewitches and allures, (⁶⁶⁷⁰Revelation 17:4). The Targum is,

“let her not seduce thee,” etc.

Ver. 26. *For by means of a whorish woman [a man is brought] to a piece of bread*, etc.] To be glad of one, and to beg for one, for the least morsel; it is expressive of the extreme poverty and want which harlots bring men to, who strip them of all their substance, and then send them going to get their bread as they can; thus the prodigal, having spent his substance with harlots, was so reduced as to desire the husks which swine ate, (⁴²¹⁵³Luke 15:13-16); so spiritual fornication or idolatry leaves men without bread for their souls, brings them into spiritual poverty, and even to desperation and death;

and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life; or “soul”^{f157}; not content with his precious substance, his jewels, his gold and silver; having stripped him of his goods and livelihood, though some think that is here intended; she lays snares for him, and draws him into those evils which bring him into the hands of her husband, who avenges himself by slaying the adulterer; or into the hands of the civil magistrate, by whom this sin of adultery was punished with death; nay, is the occasion of the ruin of his precious and immortal soul to all eternity: the precious souls of men are part of the wares of antichrist, (⁶⁶⁸¹³Revelation 18:13).

Ver. 27. *Can a man take fire in his bosom*, etc.] A whore is compared to fire, and is so called by the poets^{f158}; and it is a saying of Pythagoras,

“it is a like thing to fall into fire and into a woman^{f159},”

the Hebrew words **ç**a, “esh”, “fire”, and **hçya**, “ishah”, “a woman”, have some affinity in sound; and the phrase of taking it “into the bosom” fitly expresses the impure embraces of a harlot;

and his clothes not be burned? he cannot, it is impossible; and equally vain is it to think that a man can commit whoredom and it not be known, or he not hurt by it in his name and substance, or in his body, soul, and life.

Ver. 28. *Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?*] He cannot; if he sets his feet upon them, and continues them ever so little on them, they will be burnt, and much more if he walks upon them; and so if a man gives way to the burning lusts of his heart after a whorish woman, and commits adultery with her, though not with frequency, he will not escape punishment in one shape or another; and much more if he continues such a lewd course of life; such practices are extremely dangerous^{f160}, and there is no possibility of being unhurt by them: (see ^{<K&I2>}Job 31:12); the lake of fire and brimstone, everlasting burnings, will be the portion of those that commit fornication with the whore of Rome, (^{<R40>}Revelation 14:10,11).

Ver. 29. *So he that goeth into his neighbour's wife*, etc.] To converse with her, or lie with her, as the Targum; for it means not barely going into her house or chamber, or into her company, though without any ill design at first, which yet may be dangerous; but committing adultery with her, as this phrase is often used, (^{<O&E>}Genesis 19:31 29:21,23,30);

whosoever toucheth her; by impure dalliances, and especially by carnal copulation with her, in which sense it is used, (see Gill on ^{<A10>}1 Corinthians 7:1”);

shall not be innocent; or free^{f161} from disgrace and infamy, from loss of substance or health; from punishment in this life, either by the jealous husband or civil magistrate; and in the world to come by the Lord himself; for “whoremongers and adulterers God will judge”, (^{<S104>}Hebrews 13:4).

Ver. 30. *[Men] do not despise a thief, if he steal*, etc.] They do not discommend or reproach him for it, or fix a mark of infamy upon him, or expose him to public shame by whipping him; but rather excuse him and pity him when it appears what his case is, what put him upon it, and that he had no other intention in it than to do as follows;

to satisfy his soul; his craving appetite for food, having nothing to eat, nor no other way of getting any: the words should be supplied thus, “for he does this to satisfy his soul”; or, as the Syriac version, “for he steals to satisfy his soul”: and so they are a reason why men do not despise him, nor use him ill, because it is done with no other view; not with a wicked design to hurt his neighbour, nor with a covetous intent to increase his own substance in an unlawful way, but only to satisfy nature in distress; and another reason follows, or the former confirmed;

when he is hungry; or for “he is hungry”^{f162}; pressed with famine; the temptation is great, nature urges him to it; and though it is criminal, men in such cases wilt not bear hard upon him for it. The Targum is,

“it is not to be wondered at in a thief that he should steal to satisfy his soul when it is hungry.”

The Vulgate Latin version is,

“it is not a great fault when anyone steals, for he steals to fill a hungry soul;”

it is a fault, but it is not a very heinous one, at least it is not so heinous as adultery, for the sake of which it is mentioned, and with which it is compared: the design of the instance is to show the adultery is far greater than that; and yet in our age we see that the one is severely punished even with death for trifling things, when the other goes unpunished.

Ver. 31. *But [if] he be found, he shall restore sevenfold*, etc.] According to the law in (^{<0221>}Exodus 22:1,4); in case of theft double was to be restored, if the theft was found alive in his hand; and in some cases fourfold and fivefold. Aben Ezra observing that double and fivefold being near together in the law, joins them, and so makes sevenfold. Some think Solomon has reference to a law in other nations, which obliged to a sevenfold restoration; or that the penalty was increased in his time, but neither appears; rather the meaning is, that a thief should make restoration according to law as often as he is found guilty, be it seven times, or seventy times seven, (^{<0221>}Matthew 18:21,22); or the sense is, that he should make perfect restoration, full restitution as the law requires: but then this finding: him is not to be understood of finding him in the fact, stealing to satisfy hunger, for then to insist upon a legal restitution, as it is incompatible with such a man’s circumstances, so would contradict what is before said, that such an one is not usually reproached and found fault with; but the sense is,

if it should be found otherwise, or it should be found that he has food to satisfy his soul, as Gersom observes, and has no need to steal; or if he is found in a man's house, then he shall make restitution as the law directs, even a full one, (^{<127>}Exodus 22:2,3);

he shall give all the substance of his house: to pay the sevenfold, or to make full restitution; nay, if necessary, he himself may be sold, as the above law requires.

Ver. 32. [*But* *whoso committeth adultery with a woman*, etc.] Which is a greater degree of theft than the former, it being the stealing of another man's wife;

lacketh understanding; or "an heart"^{f163}; the thief lacks bread, and therefore steals, but this man lacks wisdom, and therefore acts so foolish a part; the one does it to satisfy hunger, the other a brutish lust;

he [that] doeth it destroyeth his own soul; is liable to have his life taken away by the husband of the adulteress; so according to Solon's law^{f164} the adulterer taken in the act might be killed by the husband: or by the civil magistrate; for according to the law of Moses he was to die, either to be strangled or stoned, (see Gill on "^{<18>}John 8:5"); and besides, he not only ruins the natural faculties of his soul, besotting, corrupting, and depraving that, giving his heart to a whore, but brings eternal destruction on it; yet so foolish is he, though it issues in the ruin of his precious soul; "he does this"^{f165}, for so the first part of this clause, which stands last in the original text, may be rendered.

Ver. 33. *A wound and dishonour shall he get*, etc.] A wound, stroke, or blow, either from the husband of the strumpet, as was often the case^{f166} in later times; or from the civil magistrate, being ordered by him to be beaten^{f167} or stoned; or from God himself inflicting diseases on him; (see ^{<127>}Genesis 12:17); where the same word is used as here: and "dishonour" from men; for though they do not despise a thief in circumstances before related, yet they will despise an adulterer, and speak reproachfully of him, whenever they have occasion to make mention of him;

and his reproach shall not be wiped away; as long as he lives, though his life may be spared; yea, it shall even continue after death; and though he may repent of his sin and reform, as in the case of David.

Ver. 34. *For jealousy [is] the rage of a man*, etc.] Fills a man with rage against him of whom he is jealous; which keeps boiling within him, till he has an opportunity of venting it: and very severe it is; it is strong as death, and cruel as the grave;

therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance; when he has an opportunity of avenging himself; whenever he finds the adulterer in his house, or catches him and his wife in bed together, he spares not to take away his life, and sometimes the life of both of them; instances of this nature history furnishes us with: or he will spare no cost and pains to prosecute him before a civil magistrate, and bring him to public justice; prayers and entreaties, bribes and gifts, will be of no avail, as follows.

Ver. 35. *He will not regard any ransom*, etc.] So that his case is much worse than, a thief's; if he is taken, he makes restitution according to law, and he is freed, and no more is said and done to him; and, at most, it is but parting with all the goods in his house; but in this case it will not do. In the Hebrew text it is, "he will not accept the face of any ransom"^{f168}; that is, as the Targum paraphrases it,

"he will not accept the face of anyone that gives a gift:"

he will have no respect unto him for the sake of the gift; whatever gift is offered, be it what it will, for the ransom of his life from death, it will be disregarded;

neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts; increase them, and keep continually giving; nothing but the life of the adulterer will satisfy him, which he will either take away himself, or obtain it in a way of legal prosecution. How foolish therefore is the man that will expose his name and credit, his health and substance, his life in this world, and his soul in another, to utter ruin, for the sake of gratifying a sordid lust! This may be interpreted of God, who is a jealous God in matters of worship, and will not suffer idolatry to go unpunished, which is spiritual adultery.

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 7

The sum of this chapter is to exhort men to attend to the doctrines and precepts of Wisdom, in order to avoid the adulterous woman; the exhortation to keep them with care, affection, and delight, in order to answer the end, is in (^{<3106>}Proverbs 7:1-5). A story is told, of Solomon's own knowledge, of a young man ensnared and ruined by a lewd woman; it begins (^{<3106>}Proverbs 7:6). The young man is described as foolish, and as throwing himself in the way of temptation, (^{<3107>}Proverbs 7:7-9); the harlot that met him is described by her attire, her subtlety, her voice, her inconstancy, her impudence, and pretensions to piety, (^{<3170>}Proverbs 7:10-14). The arguments she made use of to prevail upon him to go with her are taken partly from the elegance of her bed, the softness of it, and its sweet perfume, and satiety of love to be enjoyed in it, (^{<3175>}Proverbs 7:15-18); and partly from the absence of her husband, who was gone a long journey, and had made provision for it for a certain time, (^{<3179>}Proverbs 7:19,20). By which arguments she prevailed upon him to his utter ruin: which is illustrated by the similes of an ox going to the slaughter, a fool to the stocks, and a bird to the snare, (^{<3172>}Proverbs 7:21-23). And the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to hearken to the words of Wisdom, and to avoid the ways and paths of the harlot, by which many and mighty persons have been ruined; they being the direct road to hell and death, (^{<3174>}Proverbs 7:24-27).

Ver. 1. *My son, keep my words*, etc.] Doctrines and instructions; which, as a father to a son, or a master to his scholars, he had delivered; these he would have him observe and attend to;

and lay up my commandments with thee: as a treasure in his heart, to be brought out upon occasion; to be kept as valuable, and made use of as an antidote against and a preservative from sinning; (see ^{<3931>}Psalms 119:11). The Septuagint and Arabic versions add, what is not in the Hebrew text,

“son, honour the Lord, and thou shalt be strong;”

the Arabic adds,

“and he shall strengthen thee; and fear none besides him.”

Ver. 2. *Keep my commandments and live*, etc.] Not the commandments of the law only, but the commandments of Christ; and even the doctrines of Christ are so called, as faith in him, and love to the saints, (^{GR3}1 John 3:23 ^{GR1}John 14:21,23); which is the way to live comfortably, peaceably, pleasantly, and honourably;

and my law as the apple of thine eye; the doctrine of Christ, the law of the Lord, that goes out of Zion; which should be as dear to men as the apple of their eye, and as carefully preserved, that the least injury is not done to it; it should be kept inviolate.

Ver. 3. *Bind them upon thy fingers*, etc.] Let the above words and doctrines be as ready and familiar as if they were at the fingers' ends; or let them be always fresh in memory, as a piece of thread is tied about the fingers, to put in mind of anything to be done; or let them be as rings upon the fingers, both memorial and ornamental: or put into practice the things taught and commanded; the fingers being the instruments of action, and especially of doing things nicely and accurately;

write them upon the table of thine heart; that they may be strong in the memory, deep in the affection, and abiding in the understanding and will; (see ^{GR3}Proverbs 3:3).

Ver. 4. *Say unto wisdom, Thou art [my] sister*, etc.] Intimately acquainted, greatly beloved, and highly delighted in: this may be understood both of the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, which men should be conversant with, be strongly affected to, and take delight and pleasure in; and of Christ, the essential Wisdom of God, and who stands in the relation of a brother to his people, and should be respected as such;

and call understanding [thy] kinswoman; or “kinsman”^{f169}; such Christ is in our nature, our “goel”, our near kinsman, partaker of the same flesh and blood, and therefore is not ashamed to call us brethren, nor should we be ashamed to call him kinsman: moreover, his Word and Gospel, and the understanding of it, should be familiar to us; it should be well “known”^{f170} by us, as the word used signifies, and dwell richly in us.

Ver. 5. *That they may keep thee from the strange woman*, etc.] Nothing has a greater tendency than Christ and his Gospel, and an intimate acquaintance with them, and a retention of them, to keep from all sin, from

all fleshly lusts, from the sin of uncleanness; and also from all the errors, heresies, idolatry, superstition, and will worship, of the whore of Rome; a stranger to God and true godliness, to Christ and his truths, the Spirit and his operations;

from the stranger [which] flattereth with her words; (see Gill on ^{²⁰¹⁶Proverbs 2:16 5:3, 6:14”),}

Ver. 6. *For at the window of my house,* etc.] This is either an historical account of a matter of fact known to Solomon, or a parable made by him, setting forth the cunning artifices of an harlot, the folly and weakness of a young man ensnared, and the ruin he is brought into by her. As Solomon was a public magistrate, he is here represented as a private observer of the behaviour of his subjects, as sitting in his palace at a window, at the small windows of it, as the Targum, where he could see and not be seen himself; near to which was an harlot’s house; for they generally get about the courts of princes, where they make their prey;

I looked through my casement; or “lattice”^{f171}; the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions: understand this of the harlot looking out of the window of her house and through the casement, when she spied a young man, as follows; but this agrees not with the Hebrew text, which carries it to Solomon; though a greater than he may be designed, the omniscient God, who looks through the windows and lattice of heaven, and beholds all the actions of the children of men; those that are most private, and done in the dark; and Christ the Son of God, whose “eyes [are] like unto a flame of fire”, to look through all the darkness of Popery, represented by the Thyatirian church state; into all the intrigues of the Romish harlot, and behold all the follies of those that commit fornication with her, (^{²⁰¹⁸Revelation 2:18).}

Ver. 7. *And beheld among the simple ones,* etc.] Such as are easily persuaded and drawn into sin; simple and foolish in things moral and spiritual, and not arrived to any ripeness of understanding in things natural and civil; have seen but little of the world, and know less of religion, and are easily imposed upon and carried away with the company they keep; such simple foolish creatures are the followers of antichrist; (see ^{²⁰¹⁶2 Timothy 3:6,9);}

I discerned among the youths; or “children”^{f172}; at least in understanding, the children Jezebel, (^{²⁰¹⁸Revelation 2:23);}

a young man void of understanding; or “wanting a heart”^{f173}; to know and fear the Lord, and not in the way to learn and improve; but in company like himself, and so in a fair way to continue foolish and simple, and destitute of the true understanding of things, and exposed to the snares delusions of such that lie in wait to deceive.

Ver. 8. *Passing through the street near her corner*, etc.] The house of the harlot that stood in a corner to take in persons that came both ways; to come near which is dangerous; this was putting himself in the way of temptation; or the corner of the street where she stood to pick up young men; it could be with no good design to walk the streets in the night, and to go where harlots haunt, and where they dwell or stand; or, however, it was exposing himself to danger, and, had he took the wise man’s advice, would not have done it, (~~1188~~ Proverbs 5:8); we should abstain from all appearance of evil, and from everything that leads to sin; and as to immorality and uncleanness, so to false doctrine and false worship; the synagogues of Satan and Popish chapels should be avoided;

and he went the way to her house; that led directly to her house, which shows a bad intention; and if his design was not to commit fornication, yet to gratify his lusts by looks, dalliances, and impure discourse with her; and hither he went in a set, stately manner, as the word^{f174} signifies; with an air pleasing to the harlot, as a beau and fop of the town; and by which air and gait he was known by her to be a proper person to attack.

Ver. 9. *In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night*.] Which is the usual time adulterers take to commit their works of darkness in, by which they think to conceal them; they being such as they themselves do not care should be seen and known, (~~1845~~ Job 24:15); their works will not bear the sun and daylight, therefore they take the twilight and when the sun is set; and choose the night, and not light nights neither, but the blackest and darkest nights, as fittest for their purpose; most likely to meet with harlots, and less liable to be seen by their neighbours; but always to be seen by the omniscient God, with whom the darkness and the light are both alike. Perhaps these several words may express the time from the young man’s first setting out to his drawing nigh to the harlot’s house, and his being attacked and ensnared by her; when he first set out from his own or his father’s house, it was “twilight”, the sun was declining; by that time he had got good part of his way the sun set, and then it was “evening”; and when he came near the harlot’s house it was “black [and] dark night”: and

this may represent the gradual and progressive growth of Popery; there was first a “twilight”, a decline of the purity of Gospel light and knowledge, and then the sun of the Gospel set, which brought on an “evening”, and issued in the gross “darkness” of Popery, represented by the Thyatirian church state, as before observed; since that, the “morning star” of the Reformation has appeared, but this is become obscure, we are in a twilight again; it is neither day nor night with us as yet, but a dark black night is hastening on; and it is easy to observe how many, like this foolish young man, are marching on in a stately manner to the harlot’s house, or are verging to Popery, whether they design it or not.

Ver. 10. *And, behold, there met him a woman*, etc.] A married woman, and an adulteress, as the following account of her shows; as soon as ever she discerned the young man before described, who she knew, by his air, walk, and dress, was a fit person for her turn, she at once set out from her house, or the corner where she stood, and met him; she did not wait till he came up and made his suit to her, but she went out, and first attacked him; wherefore the word “behold” is prefixed as a note of admiration at the impudence of the woman, and as a note of attention to observe the consequence of this affair. This woman represents the woman on a scarlet-coloured beast, the mother of harlots, who, though she pretends to be the spouse of Christ, is an arrant whore, (^{667B}Revelation 17:3,5);

[*with*] *the attire of a harlot*; not with her face veiled, as Tamar was, (⁰⁸³⁴Genesis 38:14,15); for though that might be the sign of a harlot in the daytime, yet not in the night, as this was; rather with showy gaudy garments, such as the Athenian whores wore, or short ones, as the Romans; the word signifies one fitted to her body, neat and well shaped, to recommend her: so the woman, the whore of Rome, is said to be arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; signifying the outward pomp and splendour of the Romish religion, designed to captivate weak and unwary minds, (see Gill on “^{667B}Revelation 17:4”);

and subtle of heart; mistress of all artful and intriguing methods to seduce and ensnare^{f175}; or, “reserved of heart”^{f176}, cautious and wary what she said, told everything that was encouraging, but kept back what was discouraging; or she kept her own heart to herself, while she stole the hearts of others; so the Targum renders it,

“which takes away the hearts of young men;”

and to the same purpose are the versions of the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic: the subtlety of the popes, priests, jesuits, and other emissaries of Rome, to deceive the hearts of the simple, is well known; the coming of antichrist was after the working of Satan, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, (²Thessalonians 2:9,10).

Ver. 11. *She [is] loud and stubborn*, etc.] “Loud”; not that her voice may be heard, and so be found by those that seek her in the dark, as Aben Ezra interprets it; but rather clamorous, noisy, and talkative, when she has got her gallant with her; pouring out foolish and unchaste words to allure and entice him; unless it is to be understood of her bawling and scolding, when within doors, at her husband, in order to get him out, and be rid of him; to whom she is “stubborn” or “rebellious”, as the Targum, breaking covenant with him, and disobeying his commands; and departing from him, declining out of the way, as Jarchi; speaking rebellion, as Aben Ezra: all which agree with the whore of Rome, who is rebellious against Christ, whose spouse she professes to be; is perfidious to him, disobedient to his commandments; is gone out of the way of his truths and ordinances, and publishes and encourages everything that is contrary thereunto; as well as has a mouth speaking blasphemies, (^{5,6}Revelation 13:5,6);

her feet abide not in her house; to attend the business of it; but she is gadding abroad to seek her lovers, and bring them in; it is the character of good women that they are keepers at home, but it is the sign of a harlot to gad abroad, which is enlarged upon in (¹¹Proverbs 7:11).

Ver. 12. *Now [is she] without*, etc.] The word for whore is sometimes rendered in the Targum^{f177} one that goes abroad, or without her house; sitting or standing at the door of it, in an idle posture, and in order to invite her lovers in; and if she can get none this way, or quickly, grows impatient: she is

now in the streets; takes her walks abroad in the streets of the city, to see who she can light of, to pick up and bring home;

and lieth in wait at every corner; of the street, where more ways meet, sometimes at one corner, and sometimes at another, that she may take all that comes; sometimes she is “without” in the fields, and in the country, to see what she can meet with there; and sometimes in the “streets” of the city, and in the populous places of it, in the markets, and courts, and in every private corner, trying all ways to gain lovers, and satisfy her lust^{f178}:

all which may represent the diligence and industry, art and cunning, of the Romish emissaries to gain proselytes to their idolatrous worship, who everywhere lie in wait to deceive.

Ver. 13. *So she caught him, and kissed him*, etc.] The young man that went near her corner where she was plying, or in the way to her house, where she was sitting, or standing, waiting and watching for such an opportunity, for such a person, as a prey to fasten on; and no sooner she saw him, and come up to him, but, without any ceremony or address, she laid hold upon him, as the word^{f179} signifies, threw her arms about his neck, and embraced him in them; and, what is unusual for women to do, kissed him, in order to stir up wanton affections and impure desires in him;

[and] with an impudent face; or, “and she strengthened her face”^{f180}; rubbed her forehead, put on a brasen face, a whore’s front; see (^{<240B>}Jeremiah 3:3 ^{<617B>}Revelation 17:5). And

said unto him; accosted him in the following manner, without shame or blushing.

Ver. 14. *[I have] peace offerings with me*, etc.] Meaning at her house. These peace offerings were of the eucharistic kind; they were offered by way of thanksgiving for favours received; the greatest part of which, all excepting the fat on the kidneys, the rump of the sheep, the breast and right shoulder, which were the priest’s, were returned to the offerers to feast upon with their friends, and were to be eaten the same day, (^{<4071>}Leviticus 7:11-15). This she said to show that she was no common strumpet, or that prostituted herself for gain; that she was a sufficient housewife, had a considerable affluence of life, her substance greatly increased, for which she had made her thank offering that day; that she wanted nothing of him but his company, and the enjoyment of him; and that she had good cheer to regale him with. She was properly *hçdq*, “a holy” religious harlot, as the word sometimes signifies; and such is the church of Rome, which makes great pretensions to devotion and religion, yet is the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, (^{<617B>}Revelation 17:5);

this day have I paid my vows; not on account of the young man, and for his health, and for meeting with him; for those vows were not now made to be paid, but were made and paid already: but her vows of peace offerings and thanksgivings, which, as she had promised, she had performed. Under this point may be reckoned the vows of virginity and celibacy, through a show

of which the most shocking iniquities are committed by the members of the church of Rome.

Ver. 15. *Therefore came I forth to meet thee*, etc.] Having so much good cheer at home, and none to eat of it with her; and having so fond and affectionate a regard to this young man, as she pretended; he being the only person in her thoughts, whom she hoped to meet with, and whose company she desired, and his only; though, had she met any other, she would have said the same things to them. Aben Ezra, upon (¹⁰⁷⁴Proverbs 7:14), says, she told him lies; probably that might be true; but this was no doubt a lie; and it is no unusual thing for the whore of Rome to speak lies in hypocrisy, (⁵⁰²1 Timothy 4:2);

diligently to seek thy face; which of all faces she desired to see, being most lovely to her; with the comeliness of which she was exceedingly taken and ravished, and got up betimes in the morning, as the word^{f181} signifies, even before day, to seek for him;

and I have found thee; which she speaks with a rapture and ecstasy of joy; blessing herself on this happy occasion, that she should come out so opportunely, and find him so quickly; intimating, that it was a kind providence, and that the thing was of God: so conversions to the antichristian church, which are the artifice of hell, are ascribed to the divine Being.

Ver. 16. *I have decked my bed with coverings of tapestry*, etc.] Made use of by the ancients^{f182} for bed clothes: beautiful ornaments, as Gersom; and precious garments, as Jarchi. She had adorned her bed with curtains and clothes, very delightful to the eye, and inviting; and had well corded it, as some interpret it, with cords of fine linen, and all to allure her lovers; she soon discovered her lustful inclinations, what her heart was upon, and says this, and more, to fire the young man's lust, and cause him to follow her: so the church of Rome adorns her places of worship in the most pompous manner; which are the beds in which she commits adultery, (⁶⁰²Revelation 2:22); and also her images to strike the minds of people, and draw them into her idolatrous worship;

with carved [works]; perhaps the bed's head, tester, and posts, were all carved, and cut out of cedar wood and others, as Gersom observes; though some think: this refers to the variety of work in tapestry, which look like incisions and carvings, or the network, and agnet holes made therein: this

may be very well applied to the carved work, and carved images, set up in the Romish churches;

with fine linen of Egypt; the sheets, pillows, and bolsters, made thereof, and so soft to lie upon; which was reckoned the best and finest, though not the strongest. Pliny says^{f183}, of the linen of Egypt, that it had less strength and firmness in it (it being so fine); but bore the best price, and was the most gainful and profitable. The word used is not what is elsewhere met with, even when the linen of Egypt is mentioned, and indeed is nowhere else used: the Targum renders it, an Egyptian covering; and so most of the Oriental versions interpret it of bed coverings of tapestry painted, brought out of Egypt. The word is used in the Chaldee language for cords; and may here signify threads of linen twisted together, or linen cords, with which the harlot's bed was corded, and looked beautiful. Pliny^{f184} says, there were four sorts of linen in Egypt; Tanitic, Pelusiac, Butic, and Tenterytic; so called from the names and provinces where they were cultivated; and perhaps the Etun of Egypt may be the Tanitic: the fine linen, called "byssus", was brought out of India into Egypt; and is said to grow upon a tree as high as the poplar, and its leaves like a willow^{f185}. Egypt is very properly made mention of in this account; it being one of the names of the city of Rome, of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, and equal to both for lust and luxury, (~~f186~~ Revelation 11:8).

Ver. 17. *I have perfumed my bed*, etc.] As she had made it entertaining to the senses of seeing and feeling, it being showy and gaudy, soft and easy; so to the sense of smelling; and all to provoke lust, and draw into her embraces; by censing it with incense, as Donesh in Jarchi; or by sprinkling^{f186} a liquor, made of the following spices, on the head, posts, and sides of the bed, to remove all ill scents, and make it more acceptable; so the Targum, Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions, render it, "I sprinkled my bed": or, it may be, by suffumigation, which women are said to use with their garments and bed clothes^{f187}. Even this the harlot did,

with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon; all odorous, and of a sweet smell: Horace^{f188} speaks of the anointed beds of such persons; and of the above spices ointments were made, with which the harlot's bed might be perfumed. Cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, are reckoned among the wares of Babylon, or the church of Rome, (~~f189~~ Revelation 18:13).

Ver. 18. *Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning*, etc.] Taking him by the hand, and pulling him along, she says, “come”; let us not stand here in the streets, but let us go within, and after supper to bed; and there enjoy ourselves, till “inebriated” with love, as the word^{f189} signifies: so the poet^{f190} speaks of “ebrios ocellos”, “eyes drunk”, that is, with love; and so continue till the morning light, the night being the fittest season for those works of darkness: this expresses the insatiableness of her lust;

let us solace ourselves with loves; mutual love, not lawful, but criminal; more properly lusts; denoting the abundance of it, and the pleasure promised in it, which is very short lived, and bitterness in the end.

Ver. 19. *For the good man [is] not at home*, etc.] Or, “for the man is not in his house”^{f191}. She does not say, “my man”, or “my husband”; though the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions so render it; lest this should throw some difficulty in the young man’s way, or remind herself of her conjugal obligation; but “the man”, by way of contempt, as disowning him for her husband, or, however, having no regard for him in comparison of others: and this she says to encourage the young man to go with her; since her husband was gone, and show as alone, and mistress of the house;

he is gone a long journey; or, “a way afar off”^{f192}; into a distant country, and therefore need not fears return of him that night; she was prepared to answer all objections. The good man of the house may be understood of Christ, who is gone into a far country, to heaven, to take a kingdom to himself, and return, (^{<2012>}Luke 19:12); and in the mean while the church of Rome, who professes herself the true church and spouse of Christ, is committing fornication with the kings of the earth; and has set up another in his room and stead, whom she calls Christ’s vicar on earth; and flatters herself and her lovers with impunity, from his distance from her, and his vicar having a right to do as he pleases.

Ver. 20. *He hath taken a bag of money with him*, etc.] Or, “in his hand”^{f193}; either for merchandise, as Gersom; or for defraying: the charges of his journey; and both suppose length of time: if for merchandise, it required time to purchase goods, and see them packed up and sent away; or if for his journey, since it was not a few pieces of money he put in his pocket to defray expenses, but a bag of it he carried in his hand, it shows that he should be out a considerable time;

[and] will come home at the day appointed; and not before: Aben Ezra interprets it, at the beginning of the month, at the new moon, when the moon is covered^{f194}, which Horace^{f195} calls “tricesima sabbata”: but rather it is to be understood of the full moon, as Aquila and the Vulgate Latin version render it; when it is light all night, and so a proper time for travelling home again. Gersom takes it to mean the beginning of the year, when the holy blessed God, parabolically speaking, sits upon a throne to judge the world in righteousness: the Targum calls it the day of the congregation; some fixed festival day, when the congregation meets together; and at such a festival, or appointed time, this good man had fixed for his return, and when, and not before, he would. This she says to remove all fears from the young man of being surprised and caught by her husband. There is an appointed time for Christ’s second coming, when he will certainly come, and not before; and which is supposed to be at a great distance of time: and therefore wicked men and seducers, and such as the apostate church of Rome make use of to encourage themselves in their wickedness, in hopes of impunity, put the evil day far away from them; but in the appointed time Christ will come, and call his servants to an account, good and bad.

Ver. 21. *With her much fair speech she caused him to yield,* etc.] Or, “to decline” from the right way: or, “inclined him”^{f196}; his ear to listen to her, and his heart to go after her and along with her. This she did, by using a great many words, by her prolixity, and by some taking and striking expressions; lewd women are generally very talkative^{f197}. It may be rendered, “by her much doctrine”^{f198}, as the word is in (~~200~~Proverbs 4:2); so Jezebel calls herself a prophetess, and sets up for a teacher of men; and, by her false doctrine, deceives some that are called the servants of Christ to commit fornication, and eat things sacrificed to idols, (~~612~~Revelation 2:20);

with the flattering of her lips she forced him; to go along with her, not against his will, but with it: though at first there was some reluctance, conscience rose up and opposed; but her words, which were smoother than oil, found a way into his heart, and prevailed upon him to yield to her entreaties; he could no longer withstand her attacks, but surrendered to her; her charming voice, and flattering lips, had more effect upon him than her kisses; notwithstanding these he was reluctant, but could stand it out no longer against her alluring words and soothing language. With this compare the deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish through antichrist, (~~310~~2 Thessalonians 2:10).

Ver. 22. *He goeth after her straightway*, etc.] Or “suddenly”^{f199}; and inconsiderately, giving himself no time to think of what would be the sad consequences of it;

as an ox goeth to the slaughter; as senseless and stupid as that; and as ignorant of the issue as that is, led by the butcher, as if it was going to a pasture, when it is going to the slaughter house. So such persons as are ensnared by harlots; they follow them in a view of pleasure, but it ends in ruin; if not in the loss of bodily life, by the revengeful husband or civil magistrate; yet in the destruction of their immortal souls;

or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; a drunken besotted fool, who, while he is leading to the stocks, is insensible whither he is going; but when he has been there awhile, and is come out of his drunken fit, then he is sensible of his punishment and his shame. Or, “as the stocks are for the correction of a fool”^{f200}; or, as a man goes to “the stocks, to the correction of a fool”^{f201}; so the young man went after the harlot: or, as “one fettered”^{f202}, goes thither, bound hand and foot; he cannot help himself, nor avoid the shame. It denotes both the power of sin, there is no withstanding its allurements and blandishments, when once given way to, and the shame that attends or follows it. The Targum is,

“as a dog to a chain;”

and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Ver. 23. *Till a dart strike through his liver*, etc.] The fountain of blood, and so of life; which, being pierced through and poured out, is certain death, (^{<201>}Lamentations 2:11); the meaning is, till he is slain either by the hand of God, or by the civil magistrate, or by the jealous husband; and be thrust through by him, as Zimri and Cozbi were by Phinehas. The “liver” may be particularly mentioned, not only for the reason before given, but because it is the seat of lust^{f203}; so he is stricken in the part where his lust begins, where he has been smitten by Cupid’s darts: or this dart through the liver may denote some disease, infecting the blood through sinful lust. The Targum is,

“as an hart into whose liver an arrow flies;”

or is wounded by an arrow in the liver, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions: and so the meaning is, that this young man went as swiftly after the harlot as a hart does when it is wounded;

as a bird hasteth to the snare; it has its eye upon the bait, and flies swiftly to that, insensible of the snare that is laid for it;

and knoweth not that it [is] for his life; the bird knows not that the snare is set for its life, as Jarchi; or the fool knows not that it is for his soul; that it shall die, which hates correction, as Aben Ezra. The man that goes after the harlot knows not, or does not consider, that it is to the destruction of his precious and immortal soul; so the Targum,

“he knows not that it tends to the death of his soul;”

and to the same sense the Syriac and Arabic versions; the second death, which adulterers and idolaters shall have their part in, (^{<6618>}Revelation 21:8). The souls of men, and the ruin of them, are what the whore of Rome deals in, (^{<6613>}Revelation 18:13); she goes into perdition, into the bottomless pit, herself, and carries all her worshippers with her, (^{<6618>}Revelation 17:8 14:9-11).

Ver. 24. *Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children*, etc.] The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read, in the singular number, “my son”, in the same manner as the chapter begins; but it is in the plural number in the Hebrew text; and so read the Targum and Syriac version, “children”, the children of Solomon; not only those of his own body, but all such that put themselves under his instruction, or were willing to take his advice: it may be extended to all the children of men, for all are interested herein; especially such who profess to be the children of God and of Christ, the followers of wisdom. This is the epilogue, or application of the above story. Since this is the case, that young men are in danger of being ensnared and brought to ruin by this harlot, therefore take the advice of the wisest of men, even of Wisdom herself;

and attend to the words of my mouth; the doctrines of Christ; the best preservative from the allurements of the whore of Rome.

Ver. 25. *Let not thine heart decline to her ways*, etc.] Or turn not aside from the right way, the path of truth and holiness, to those of the whorish woman, that lead to ruin and destruction; do not so much as think of going out of the one into the other; let there not be the least wandering thought, affection, or disposition of the mind thereunto; stop and check the first motion of the heart, which leads to a compliance with her, and seems to be directed to her ways, or to betray any love and liking of them;

go not astray in her paths; for whoever walks in her paths goes astray from God and his law; from Christ and his Gospel; and from the true church of God; and from the right paths of faith, duty and worship.

Ver. 26. *For she hath cast down many wounded*, etc.] Wounded in their name, character, and reputation; in their bodies by diseases; and in their souls by guilt, shame, and horror, through a compliance with her sinful lusts: these she “cast down” from the honours they were possessed of, from the health they enjoyed, and from the peace and tranquillity of mind they formerly felt within them. And not a single person, as the young man instanced in, or a few only, but “many”; great multitudes, hundreds and thousands, and those not weak, and foolish, and inconstant, as he might be thought to be; but such as were “great”^{f204} and mighty, as the word also signifies; men of great riches, and wisdom, and courage; as soldiers^{f205}, mighty men of war, such as wound and kill others; which seems the true sense of the word here used: and therefore none ought to trust in themselves, nor trust themselves in her company, nor in the least decline to her ways; and especially such as are weak and unskilful, and ignorant of her devices, as the “children” here addressed;

yea, many strong [men] have been slain by her; men famous for martial exploits, as Samson and others, have been overcome by her: some of great fortitude of mind have not been able to withstand her, she has prevailed over them; and others of robust constitutions have been weakened by diseases, contracted through incontinency with her; and some have suffered death by her means, either from her husband, or her gallants, or the civil magistrate: and of these there have been “innumerable” instances; so the word^{f206} for “strong men” sometimes signifies; and so it is here rendered in the Septuagint and Arabic versions, “and innumerable are they whom she has slain”. All the world have wondered after the whore of Rome; kings of the earth and mighty men have committed fornication with her; high and low, rich and poor, have been ruined by her; thousands have gone to hell by her means; and some of the sycophants of Rome have even said, that if the pope of Rome should send thousands to hell, of which they seem themselves to be conscious, no one should say to him, What dost thou?

Ver. 27. *Her house is the way to hell*, etc.] Or “ways”^{f207}; the broad highway to it; either to the grave, as “sheol” often signifies; or to hell itself, the place of the damned: to go into her house, and commit wickedness with her, is to take a step to destruction, a large stride towards hell; and, if

grace prevent not, will bring a man thither. Who would go into such a house, and much less dwell there, which is the very suburbs of hell?

going down to the chambers of death; to enter her chamber, to step into her bed, howsoever decked and adorned, entertaining and inviting it is, not only leads to the chambers of the grave, as the Targum; but to the lowest and innermost parts of hell; the apartments of the second death, the lot of all unclean and idolatrous persons, without repentance and faith. The Phoenicians called Pluto, the god of hell, by the name of Moth^{f208}, a word similar to this used here; and so those chambers are no other than the chambers of hell. Plautus^{f209} also calls the gate of a whore's house the gate of hell; which agrees with the first clause of the verse.

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 8

This chapter contains the instructions of Wisdom or Christ; showing the excellency of them, and the author of them, in opposition to the harlot and her allurements, in the preceding chapter. Christ, under the name of Wisdom, is represented as an herald, publishing the Gospel in the ministry of the word, either in person or by his servants, (^{2180L}Proverbs 8:1). The places where this proclamation is made are described, (^{2182P}Proverbs 8:2,3); the persons to whom, (^{2184P}Proverbs 8:4,5). The excellency of the things delivered, being right things; truth, agreeably to the word of God, plain and easy to be understood, and of more worth than gold, silver, and precious stones, (^{2186P}Proverbs 8:6-11). And then Wisdom, or Christ, is commended and recommended by his consummate prudence and knowledge, by his hatred of evil, and by his influence on the political affairs of kings and princes, (^{2182P}Proverbs 8:12-16); and the advantages of those that are early seekers of him are pointed out; their enjoyment of his favour, of his riches, honour and righteousness; and their being led by him in right paths now, and inheriting eternal glory hereafter, (^{2187P}Proverbs 8:17-21). And next follows an account of his existence from eternity as a divine Person, illustrated by a variety of phrases, (^{2182P}Proverbs 8:22-29); and of his being with the Father; of his great affection for him, and complacency in him; and of Christ's wonderful delight and pleasure in the sons of men, (^{2183P}Proverbs 8:30,31). And the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to them to hearken to his instructions; setting forth the happiness of those that wait on him in public ordinances, and find him; and the misery of those that hate and reject him.

Ver. 1. *Doth not wisdom cry?* etc.] Christ, who is the Wisdom of God; (see Gill on "^{2181P}Proverbs 1:20"); and which clearly appears from his subsistence with the Father, his eternal existence, and from many personal properties, characters, and actions ascribed to him throughout the whole of this chapter, and in the following. "Crying" is here attributed to him, which signifies proclaiming, publishing, preaching the everlasting Gospel, which directs men in the right way of enjoying peace, comfort, honour, and

eternal happiness; the allusion is to an herald that this up his voice aloud at noon day in the public streets when he proclaims; and is opposed to the whispers of a harlot, at night, in a corner; truth seeks no corner, its voice is heard at noon day, it will bear the light. Now, “does not” or “shall not Wisdom cry”, or Christ preach; verily he does or will, in his word, by his prophets under the former dispensation; in his own person, and by his apostles and ministers, under the present; who then would hearken to the alluring voice of a harlot, or hear Jezebel the wicked prophetess teach, when Christ himself preaches, or however by his faithful ministers?

and understanding put forth her voice? the same with Wisdom, or Christ, (see ^{<4084>}Proverbs 8:14); by whose voice the Gospel is meant, which is the voice of Christ, which is heard and followed by the sheep of Christ, and not the voice of a stranger; and “putting it forth”, giving or uttering it, signifies the publication of it.

Ver. 2. *She standeth in the top of high places*, etc.] To be both seen and heard, for which reason Christ went up into a mountain and preached, (^{<4085>}Matthew 5:1);

by the way; the roadside, to instruct and direct passengers as they go along, to show them the right way, and caution them against taking wrong ways; so did Christ, (^{<4086>}Matthew 16:6 22:16);

in the places of the paths; or, “between the paths”^{<210>}; where more ways than one met together, and so difficult to know which was the right path to take; here Christ stands in the ministry of the word to direct, and says, “this is the way, walk ye in it”, (^{<2302>}Isaiah 30:21); and as there are many ways which are proposed to men to walk in, some of open profaneness and impiety, and others that have a show of religion and devotion, but both lead men wrong; the ministers of Christ show, and he by them, the way of salvation, and how to avoid such as lead to destruction, (^{<4087>}Acts 16:17).

Ver. 3. *She crieth at the gates*, etc.] Of the temple, or of the city, where the courts of judicature were, and persons met on civil accounts; and where people were continually passing and repassing;

at the entry of the city; meeting those that came out of the country to the city upon trade and business;

at the coming in at the doors; of the temple, or city, or private houses; all these expressions denote the publicness of the Gospel ministry, both by

Christ himself, who spake openly to the world, always taught in the synagogues and temple, and in secret said nothing; and who ordered his disciples to preach what they heard and received from him upon the house tops, (~~4181~~John 18:20 ~~4107~~Matthew 10:27); so did the Apostle Paul, (~~4411~~Acts 20:20,27).

Ver. 4. *Unto you, O men, I call*, etc.] Not angels, the fallen angels; for, as they had nothing to do with Christ, he had nothing to do with them, or say unto them, (~~4182~~Matthew 8:29); nor the brutes, irrational creatures; for, though the Gospel is to be preached to every creature, yet only to rational ones, (~~4165~~Mark 16:15), “men”, whom God has loved and Christ has redeemed; these are by the Gospel called, and called effectually. There are some men indeed who are only externally called; but there are others who are also called with an holy calling, of which (see Gill on “~~4104~~Proverbs 1:24”). Some think men of eminence are here meant, as rich men, so Aben Ezra; or men of wisdom and knowledge, such as the Scribes and Pharisees, and learned doctors among the Jews; but it rather seems to design men indefinitely, of whatsoever rank or order, state or condition;

and my voice [is] to the sons of men; which some interpret of the poor, as Aben Ezra; or those who are more illiterate, or the common people; so that high and low, rich and poor, have the Gospel preached unto them; but the phrase seems to intend the same as before, the same thing is said in different words.

Ver. 5. *O ye simple, understand wisdom*, etc.] The Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, particularly the doctrine of salvation by Christ; it is the highest wisdom to know Christ and him crucified: and they are “the simple” who are weak and easy to be imposed upon, who are here called unto; and generally speaking such are they to whom the mysteries of grace are made known, while they are hid from the wise and prudent;

and ye fools, be of an understanding heart; or “cause the heart to understand”; or “get an understanding heart”^{f211}; make use of all means to get spiritual wisdom and understanding; all men, let them be what they will in other respects, are fools as to a spiritual and experimental knowledge of divine things; and that man can only be said to have truly an understanding heart that knows his own folly, the plague of his heart, his need of Christ, the worth of him; and has an understanding given him to know him and his interest in him.

Ver. 6. *Hear; for I will speak of excellent things*, etc.] Such are the things of the Gospel; they not only excel what the light of nature dictates and directs to, but even what the law of Moses commands and requires; the doctrines of the Gospel are excellent in their author, nature, and use; particularly those which respect the love, grace, and mercy of God, the person and offices of Christ, the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and the great salvation which he has wrought out. These are the doctrines of grace which proceed out of Wisdom's mouth, and are such as never man spake the like; they are to be approved of, being what differ from others, and to be preferred unto them, (~~5000~~Philippians 1:9); or "princely things";^{f212}, as the word may be rendered; which became him who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, and the Prince of peace to speak; and are worthy to be received by princes, though little known and valued by the princes of this world; and are embraced and, esteemed by those who are the princes of the Lord's people: or they are "principal" ones, or "leading" truths^{f213}; of the greatest importance, interesting ones; "praiseworthy", as Aben Ezra, or "honourable", as Gersom, and to be had in the highest esteem and veneration;

and the opening of my lips [shall be] right things: agreeable to right reason, though above it; consonant to the righteous law of God, and even to the perfection of God's righteousness, which is greatly glorified by the obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ, and redemption through him; and these are the excellent and principal doctrines of the Gospel, even justification by Christ's righteousness, atonement by his sacrifice, and redemption through his blood; all which are consistent with and greatly display the justice of God: nor are any of the doctrines of the Gospel licentious ones, but on the contrary teach men to live soberly and righteously; as well as they are plain and easy to such who are conversant with them, as is often expressed, and may be the sense of the word here used also.

Ver. 7. *For my mouth shall speak truth*, etc.] And nothing but the truth; and nothing more or less can be spoken by Wisdom, or Christ, who is truth itself; nothing else can come out of his mouth, or drop from his lips; all the doctrines of Christ are agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, and are what the Spirit of truth leads into; and the whole is called "the word of truth": there are many very particular and special truths, but the principal one is salvation by Jesus Christ;

and wickedness [is] an abomination to my lips; the sin of lying more especially, as opposed to truth; this is detestable to wisdom, what Christ never suffered his lips to utter; for no lie is of the truth, but of Satan the father of lies; and, as it is abhorred by Christ, it ought to be by all good men.

Ver. 8. *All the words of my mouth [are] in righteousness*, etc.] Or “with righteousness”^{f214}; are connected with it, are agreeable to it; are righteous ones, consistent with righteousness, with the righteous nature, will, and law of God: or “are concerning righteousness”^{f215} the necessity of righteousness in order to eternal life; the insufficiency of man’s own righteousness to entitle to it; the need, worth, and excellency of the righteousness of Christ for that purpose; and of the propriety and usefulness of a life of righteousness and holiness, which the grace of God instructs men in;

[there is] nothing froward or perverse in them; that is contrary to right reason, or to the law of God, or to the Scriptures of truth, or to the analogy of faith; nor is there any contradiction in the doctrines of the Gospel one to another, but an entire harmony and uniformity in them; they are not “yea” and “nay”.

Ver. 9. *They [are] all plain to him that understandeth*, etc.] Whose understanding is enlightened by the Spirit of God; who is a spiritual man, that has a discerning, and can judge of spiritual things: as for the carnal man, let him have what natural knowledge or wisdom he will, he cannot know these things; for they are spiritually discerned, and can only be discerned by spiritual men. The Bible is a sealed book to others, learned or unlearned; the mysteries or doctrines of the Gospel are hid in parables from such; but those to whom Christ has given an understanding to know him, these know them, and they are plain unto them: for though there are some things hard to be understood in the Scriptures, as in Paul’s epistles, and some sublime truths in the Gospel; yet those which are necessary to salvation are easily understood; that faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners, is a very plain one;

and right to them that find knowledge; a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ and his truths. The Targum is,

“to them who desire knowledge;”

and so the Syriac version; that seek for it heartily and diligently, in a right way, in the use of proper means, under the direction and by the assistance of the Spirit of God.

Ver. 10. *Receive my instruction, and not silver*, etc.] Not but that silver may be desired, sought after and received, consistent with the instructions of wisdom; though an anxious, immoderate, sinful pursuit after it, hinders the reception of them; and when they are in competition, the one is to be preferred to the other: the doctrines of the Gospel are of more worth, and more to be desired, than thousands of gold and silver; and therefore the meaning is, that the instruction of wisdom should be received rather than silver; it should have the preference; so Gersom interprets it, and with which agrees the following clause:

and knowledge rather than choice gold; that is, the knowledge of Christ, and the knowledge of God in Christ; the knowledge of the Gospel, and the truths of it; a spiritual and experimental knowledge of these things is of more value than the finest gold, than the gold of Ophir; (see ^{<1910>}Psalm 19:10 119:72).

Ver. 11. *For wisdom [is] better than rubies*, etc.] A sort of precious stones: or, “than precious stones”^{f216} in general; so the Targum and Septuagint, Arabic and Syriac versions; even than all of them, as the Vulgate Latin version; or, than “pearls”^{f217}, or “carbuncles”^{f218}: there are none equal to it, nor is it to be procured by them; see (^{<1836>}Job 28:16-19);

and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it; (see Gill on “^{<1085>}Proverbs 3:15”).

Ver. 12. *I Wisdom dwell with Prudence*, etc.] Here Wisdom begins to speak in her own person, and continues to do so unto the end of the chapter; or Christ describes himself, pencils out and draws his own picture, and a most lovely one it is. In this clause Christ is described by the habitation in which he dwells, “I Wisdom inhabit Prudence”^{f219}; so the words may be rendered; that is the house in which I dwell: or by his companion with whom he dwells, “with Prudence”; that is my companion with whom I am familiarly conversant. The phrase, taken both ways, shows that Christ is very largely, yea, fully possessed of prudence; as a man that dwells in a house is the proprietor and possessor of it, so prudence is Christ’s; it belongs to him, he enjoys it; he dwells in prudence, and prudence dwells in him; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in

him, and the Spirit of wisdom rests upon him: and also it shows that prudence is natural to him, and not adventitious; it does not come from abroad, nor does he go abroad for it; he and Prudence are as it were born and brought up together in one and the same house: and likewise that there is an intimacy and familiarity between them; Prudence is most present with Christ, is always near him, and ready at hand to be exercised by him; as it was when he was incarnate on earth; he “dealt prudently”, as it was prophesied he should, (²⁷⁰¹³Isaiah 52:13); which appeared in his disputation with the doctors in the temple at twelve years of age; by his prudent answers to the ensnaring questions of his enemies; and throughout the whole of his ministry, both as to the manner and matter of it and particularly at the time of his seizure, arraignment, trial, and crucifixion. Or by “prudence” may be meant prudent men, such as are possessed of this quality or virtue, and with such Wisdom, or Christ, dwells; not with the wise and prudent of this world; nor with such who are so in their own conceit; but with such who are sensible of their folly; who are humbled under a sense of sin, and are made wise unto salvation; who believe in Christ, which is a point of the highest prudence; and who walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; such as these have the presence and company of Christ;

and find out knowledge of witty inventions; the word **twmzm** is sometimes used in an ill sense, and is rendered “wicked devices”, (^{3112P}Proverbs 12:2 ^{4371P}Psalms 37:7); and may be taken in this sense here. Christ, who is God omniscient, knows all that is in the hearts of men; all their thoughts, schemes, and devices; he found out, he scented the knowledge of them when here on earth; he was privy to the secret thoughts and wickedness of men’s hearts; he knew all the hypocritical designs and views of the Pharisees, when they tempted him with ensnaring questions; he was apprised of all the ways and methods they devised to take away his life before the time, and so escaped them; he found out the knowledge of Judas’s wicked scheme to betray him, and spoke of it to him and others before it was executed; and he knew all the wicked devices and stratagems of Satan against himself, in tempting him in the wilderness, and in putting it into the heart of Judas to betray him; and he knows all his wiles and artful schemes to decoy his people, and makes them known unto them, so that they are not ignorant of his devices. Moreover, it may be understood and interpreted in a good sense, of the thoughts, devices, and purposes of God’s heart, as in (^{34231P}Jeremiah 23:20 51:11); and particularly as relating to

man's redemption and salvation: this is a device or "invention" of God; sin is man's invention, by which he fell; but the recovery of man is the invention of God; he found out the persons to be saved in his eternal decrees; and the person that should be the Saviour of them in his council and covenant, and appointed him for the work; and he found out the way and manner of saving men by him, even by the ransom and sacrifice of himself: and this is a "witty" invention, wherein God has abounded in all wisdom and prudence; as appears by settled upon so proper a person to be the Saviour as his own Son; by bringing it about in a way so agreeable to all his perfections, to the satisfaction of his justice, and the honour of his law; and in making such partakers of it, and in such a way, as most glorifies the riches of his grace. And this scheme Christ has full knowledge of, being in the bosom of his Father, as one brought up with him; and was the Angel of the great council, and present when the design was formed; and besides he has found it to his cost, even at the expense of his precious blood; and so has "obtained", or "found redemption" for us, as the phrase is in (~~3912~~ Hebrews 9:12), and having found it, and the knowledge of it, he makes it known to others by his Spirit, word, and ministers. Likewise these "witty inventions" may be interpreted of the whole Gospel, and the doctrines of it; the Gospel is an "invention", not of men, but of God; not a scheme and device of men, but of God; it is not taught by men, and learned of them, or of them only, but of God; and a "witty" one it is, it is the wisdom of God, the manifold wisdom of God, though esteemed foolishness by men. This Christ has "found out the knowledge of"; he has full and perfect knowledge of it, it is hid in him; it came and was preached by him, as it never was before or since; and he communicated, and still does communicate the knowledge of it; and blessed are they that know the joyful sound!

Ver. 13. *The fear of the Lord [is] to hate evil*, etc.] All evil in general, evil thoughts, evil words, evil actions, evil company, evil worship, and evil doctrines; and by "the fear of the Lord", which shows itself in an hatred of evil, because of the loathsome nature of it, and being contrary to God and his will, and as it appears in the glass of the law, and especially in the glass of pardoning love, is meant not the fear of his judgments and wrath, or a distrust of his grace and goodness, much less an hypocritical fear, or a mere show of devotion; but a reverential affection for him, which is peculiar to children; a filial, godly fear, which is consistent with strong faith, great joy, and true courage; and is opposite to pride and self-

confidence, and is accompanied with real holiness; it takes its rise from the grace of God, and is greatly increased and promoted by the discoveries of his love and goodness: this is brought into the account and description of wisdom, to distinguish it from carnal wisdom; to commend wisdom from its holiness; for this the beginning of wisdom, yea, wisdom itself, (~~833~~ Job 28:28 ~~8310~~ Psalm 111:10 ~~1000~~ Proverbs 1:7 9:10);

pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate; these are the particulars of evil, which Wisdom, or Christ, declares his hatred of. “Pride”, which appears in men in thinking too highly of themselves, in speaking too well of themselves, in despising others, in setting up and trusting to their own righteousness for salvation, and in crying up the purity and power of human nature; this is very contrary to the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus, and must be hateful to him: “arrogancy” differs little from pride, and the two words in the Hebrew are very much the same, very little differ; it is an ascribing that to a man’s self which does not belong to him, whether in things natural, civil, or spiritual; when men attribute their justification and salvation to their own works, it is arrogancy, and must be hateful to Christ; who been at so much pains and expense to bring in everlasting righteousness, and work out salvation for men: it is the height of arrogancy in a man to conceit he a power to regenerate, renew, and convert himself, and, with the haughty Arminian, Grevinchovius, to say, he has made himself to differ from others; this must be hateful to Christ, by whose Spirit and grace this only is done: and it is a piece of arrogancy when men ascribe all the good works done by them to their own power, when without Christ they can do nothing; which therefore must be displeasing to him. “The evil way”, as Aben Ezra observes, is an evil custom and course of sinning; a man’s own way, which he chooses and delights in, and which leads to destruction: “and the froward mouth” is the mouth that speaks perverse things; things contrary to a man’s own heart, contrary to truth, to the rule of the divine word, to the Gospel, to Christ and his people, and to all men; which must be hateful and abominable to him who is truth itself.

Ver. 14. *Counsel [is] mine, and sound wisdom,* etc.] The words and sentiments in this and the following clause are the same with those in (~~8123~~ Job 12:13); and scent to be taken from thence, which are spoken of God; and being here applied to Wisdom, show that a divine Person is meant; and are very applicable to him who the Wisdom of God, and the power of God; and on whom rests the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,

of counsel, and of might, and of the fear of the Lord, (~~102~~1 Corinthians 1:24 ~~210~~Isaiah 11:2). “Counsel” belongs to him, and is used and exercised by him, as concerned with the Father and Spirit, both in the words of nature and grace; to whom all the purposes and counsels of God are known; and who was consulted in the creation of man, and in his redemption, reconciliation, and salvation; the council of peace being between them both: and it belongs to him, and is used by him with respect to his people; he is council to them; he gives them counsel and advice, he being the wonderful Counsellor; he gave it in person when here on earth, both to sinners and to saints, and which continues on record: the Gospel is the counsel of Christ, and it is very suitable and seasonable, hearty, sincere, and faithful; is freely given, and, being taken, infallibly succeeds; (see ~~108~~Revelation 3:18). And he is council for them; he appears for them in court; introduces their persons, and presents their petitions to his Father; pleads their cause, is their advocate, answers to all charges and accusations; and calls for and requires, in point of law and justice, every blessing of goodness for them. “Sound wisdom” belongs to Christ; “wisdom”, from whence he has his name in this book; “sound” wisdom, such as is solid and substantial, real and true, in opposition to the wisdom of the world, to knowledge falsely so called, to carnal, sensual, and earthly wisdom. The Gospel may be meant, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery; sound doctrine, a form of sound words, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus: both grace and glory may be intended, which are both in the gift of Christ; grace is that “wisdom” which he makes his people to “know in the hidden part”; and glory is that “sound wisdom” laid up for the righteous, the better and more enduring substance in heaven. The word here used signifies essence or substance; and some render it, “whatsoever is”;^{f220} whatever has a being, that is Christ’s; all creatures are his, the earth and the fulness of it, and they that dwell therein;

I [am] understanding; essentially as a divine person; his understanding is infinite; there is no searching of it; it reaches to all persons and things: as Mediator, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding rests on him without measure, by which he was furnished for his prophetic office; as man, his understanding was amazing to all that knew him, and heard him. Christ not only has an understanding, but he is understanding itself; he is the fountain, author, and giver of understanding; of all the natural understanding there is in men; of the light of nature and reason, of those intellectual faculties

which men are possessed of; and of all the spiritual understanding in divine things, which his people are partakers of, (~~Gen~~ 1 John 5:20);

I have strength; as the mighty God; which appears in his creation of all things out of nothing, in his upholding all things by his power, and in his government of the world. As Mediator, he has the Spirit of might upon him; all power in heaven and earth is given him; his strength is manifest in the salvation of his people, when he came travelling in the greatness of it to save them; by fulfilling the law for them; by bearing their sins, and the punishment due to them; and by destroying all their enemies: and in his plucking them out of the hands of Satan, out of the burning, out of the mire and clay at conversion; in bearing and supporting them under all their burdens, afflictions, and temptations, and in preserving them safe to his kingdom and glory; and in giving them strength in the mean time to bear the cross, to withstand temptations and corruptions, to exercise the graces of the spirit, and perform the duties of religion.

Ver. 15. *By me kings reign*, etc.] Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; they are made kings by him, and are under him; he sets them up, and deposes them at pleasure; they have their kingdoms, crowns, and sceptres from him, and are accountable to him. The Syriac version renders it, “for me”; it is for the sake of Christ they reign; and they ought to seek his glory, and the good of his kingdom and interest. Moreover, as it is by him they are set up as kings and governors, and are preserved and continued in their governments by him; so it is by him that they rule well who do so, that they reign justly, wisely, happily, and successfully; all the wisdom which appears in their administrations is all from him; all those wise laws, which are enacted by them for the good of their subjects, is owing to the wisdom and prudence he gives them;

and princes decree justice; these may design such who are under kings, are assisting to them in government; who are of their privy council, and give advice in making laws, and putting them into execution. Here it particularly regards their making just and righteous laws for the good of the state, in which they are employed by kings; or their advising to them, and assisting in drawing them up: and now all the wisdom that is necessary hereunto, and which is conspicuous herein, is all from Christ; who has the spirit of princes in his hands, and orders and directs them as he pleases. The Targum is,

“I anoint princes with justice.”

Ver. 16. *By me princes rule*, etc.] All governors of provinces and cities, who are under the king as supreme; the discharge of whose office in a right manner requires much wisdom, prudence, justice, and integrity; all which they have from Christ, as well as their power of ruling, that rule well;

and nobles, [even] all the judges of the earth; the word^{f221} for nobles signifies persons of a “free” spirit, generous, bountiful men; such as are called “benefactors”, (⁴⁰²⁵Luke 22:25); so one of the Ptolemys, king of Egypt, was called Evergetes. Such who govern, not in a cruel and rigorous manner, but with clemency and gentleness; who, as they are “free” and noble themselves, their subjects are a free people, and enjoy their privileges and liberties fully and quietly. And “the judges of the earth” are such, as sit on benches of justice, hear and try causes, and pass sentence on men; which requires great skill and knowledge, and much faithfulness and integrity, which all that perform their office aright have from Christ. How great therefore must he be! how wise and just! from whom all rulers, supreme and subordinate, have their power; prudence, generosity, and justice!

Ver. 17. *I love them that love me*, etc.] Those that love Christ are such who are born again, and have a spiritual and experimental knowledge of him; that believe in him, have seen his loveliness, have had his love shed abroad in their hearts, and a view of his fulness and suitableness; some comfortable apprehensions of their relation to him, and interest in him, and are indulged with communion with him: the love with which such souls love Christ springs from their very hearts, is cordial and sincere; it gives him the preference to all objects, to all creatures, angels or men, and to all creature enjoyments; it is drawn out to all of Christ, and to all that belong to him, or are his; and though it may be lost, become remiss and abate in its fervency, it cannot be lost; and is what is very acceptable to Christ, and highly esteemed of by him: it shows itself by a high veneration for the truths and doctrines of his Gospel; by a strict regard to his commands and ordinances; by a hearty affection for his people; by parting with and bearing all for his sake; a carefulness of offending him, and losing his company; by an earnest desire after his presence, and delight in it, and by a concern at his absence; by a diligent inquiry after him in the use of means until he is found, and by the joy expressed at finding of him: now such Christ loves; not that he begins to love his people when they begin to love him, for he

loved them from everlasting; as appears by his espousing their persons, undertaking their cause, and taking the care and charge of their persons, grace, and glory, so early; and by his assumption of their nature in time, and by his suffering and dying for them; all which were before they had any love to him: but this points out and describes the persons, who may be assured of the love of Christ to them, since their love to him springs from his to them; besides, it designs some fresh manifestations of his love, and the continuance of it; as well as suggests that he has future blessings to bestow on such, as fresh marks of his affection, and instances of his love to them; such as granting them his gracious presence, giving them more grace; causing all things, even afflictions, to work together for their good; preserving and keeping them from falling, and at last giving them eternal glory and happiness; see (^{<49-21>}John 14:21-23);

and those that seek me early shall find me: and they are such who see their need of Christ, and know the worth of him; and those seek to him in the use of means, the word and ordinances, and as assisted by his Spirit and grace, for pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, which are only to be had in him: and they may be said to “seek [him] early”, or “morning him”^{f222}, who seek him in the morning of youth, or in the first place, above all things else, and that with the greatest eagerness and earnestness, diligence and importunity; and such always are successful; they “find” Christ, and life, righteousness, and salvation in him, and every blessing, and therefore are happy, (see Gill on “^{<10B3>}Proverbs 3:13”).

Ver. 18. *Riches and honour [are] with me*, etc.] By “riches” are meant not the riches of Christ’s person, the perfections of his nature, his works, and his vast empire over all creatures, and the revenues arising from thence, which though durable, yet not communicable; not temporal riches, which, though with him, and at his dispose, yet these, at least a large share of them, and in common, is not given to his people, nor are they durable; but the riches of grace, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, and sanctifying grace, are intended, and the riches of glory in another world: and so “honour” designs not that which he has as a divine Person, or as Mediator, which is incommunicable; much less temporal honour, for though this is with him and from him, as appears (^{<10B5>}Proverbs 8:15,16); yet it is not usually given to his followers, who are not the great and noble, but generally reckoned the offscouring of all things; nor is such honour durable; but the honour he gives his people lies in their being espoused to him, in being the sons of

God through him, in being made by him kings and priests unto God, and in reigning with him here and for ever;

[yea], durable riches and righteousness; which last some understand as another adjunct and epithet of riches, and represent them in opposition to mammon of unrighteousness, or to riches either ill-gotten or ill-managed; and expresses another property of Christ's riches of grace and glory, as being what are come by in a way of righteousness into his hands, and are distributed faithfully by him; though rather it respects a distinct thing which is with Christ, and in his hands to give, even his justifying righteousness, consisting of his active and passive obedience, which he has wrought out, is in him, and given by him to his people; and is what is called the righteousness of God and of faith; which secures from condemnation and entitles to eternal life; and is an everlasting one, as durable as his riches are, which are his fulness that ever continues with him: pardon is "simul" and "semel"^{f223}, and for ever; sanctifying grace, as faith, hope, and love, always abide; and about the riches of glory there can be no doubt of the permanency of them; and the same may be said of honour both here and hereafter.

Ver. 19. *My fruit [is] better than gold, yea, than fine gold*, etc.] This is said in allusion to the fruit that grows on trees, Wisdom, or Christ, being a tree of life, (see Gill on "²¹⁸⁸Proverbs 3:18"); and so he is compared to other trees, (²¹⁸⁸Song of Solomon 2:3 ²⁸⁴⁸Hosea 14:8). His "fruit" are the blessings of grace, such as redemption, reconciliation, pardon, justification, adoption, and eternal life; these are his by covenant, are procured by him, and are communicated from him; also the graces of his Spirit called fruits, as faith, hope, love, etc. of which he is the author and object; and even good works, the fruits of his grace; they are done in virtue of union to him, by his strength, and are directed to his glory: and all these, especially his grace and the blessings of it, are preferable to the finest gold; they are more valuable as to their intrinsic worth and excellency; they are more useful and profitable, being for the good and welfare of immortal souls; and they are more satisfying and more lasting, and which cannot be obtained with such a corruptible thing as gold is;

and my revenue than choice silver; as the former word refers to fruits that grow on trees, this to such as spring from seed sown in the earth; (see ⁴⁸³⁹Leviticus 23:39), where the same word is used as here, and is also rendered "revenue" in (²⁴²³Jeremiah 12:13); Christ himself is compared to

seed, and so his word, (~~4824~~ John 12:24 ~~4881~~ Luke 8:11); and the fruit or revenue thereof is the same as before: or else the allusion is to the profit arising from riches, from estates, and their annual rent; or from money put out to use, or improved by commerce, and so signifies the same with the gain and merchandise of wisdom, (see Gill on "~~4084~~ Proverbs 3:14"). Aben Ezra construes the words thus, "my revenue is choicer than silver"; but our version is best.

Ver. 20. *I lead in the way of righteousness*, etc.] As a king his subjects, a shepherd his flock; as a guide to persons that are ignorant and out of the way; as parents their children, teaching them to go; or as a master his scholars: and the way Wisdom, or Christ, leads his people in, is "the way of righteousness"; the doctrine of righteousness, or the way and manner of a sinner's justification in the sight of God; all men are out of the way of it, and are ignorant of the right way; Christ leads them into it: he leads them off of their own righteousness by showing that it does not deserve the name of one; that it is unacceptable to God, unprofitable to him, and insufficient to justify them before him; and he leads them to his own righteousness, which he has wrought out; and shows them that this is answerable to the demands of law and justice, is acceptable to God, and imputed by him without works; and this he does in his word and by his Spirit: and in this way of righteousness he leads them into his Father's presence with acceptance; to himself, in which he beholds them with pleasure; and to eternal glory, which gives them a title to it: he also leads into the practice of righteousness; he teaches them, and they learn of him works of righteousness; he goes before them by way of example, and he gives them his Spirit and grace to enable them to perform them; and which may more especially be intended in the next clause;

in the midst of the paths of judgment: of truth and holiness; in his commandments and ordinances; in all which they are led not against their wills but with them; and not only walk but run with the greatest cheerfulness in those ways and paths of his.

Ver. 21. *That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance*, etc.] Substantial blessings, blessings indeed, as all spiritual ones are; and substantial grace, as every grace is; and substantial communion with God and Christ, which is a real thing, and had in the way of righteousness; also substantial happiness hereafter, as eternal life is; which being expressed by "substance", or "that which is"^{f224}, as the word used signifies, denotes the

reality of it; it being not only actually promised, prepared, and laid up for the saints, but is what is known by them now, and of which they have the earnest and pledge; as also the solidity of it, being opposed to the vain and shadowy things of this life; as well as the riches, valuableness, and continuance of it; it is enduring substance, which cannot be wasted nor taken away; which is in its own nature incorruptible, and the saints will always continue to enjoy it. God himself may be meant, who is most eminently **ϥ**, that which is, a self-existent Being, and the Being of beings, essence itself, and of whom the saints are heirs, and who will be their portion now and for ever, (^{<4817>}Romans 8:17 ^{<4973>}Psalm 73:26); and such that shall enjoy this inheritance are those that “love” Christ; to them it is promised, for them it is prepared, and to them it will be given, (^{<3012>}James 1:12) (^{<4119>}1 Corinthians 2:9 ^{<5048>}2 Timothy 4:8), not that their love to Christ is the meritorious cause of so valuable a blessing; but this describes the persons that shall have it, and points out a proper disposition for it, without which none would be fit to enjoy it; and besides there is a connection between grace and glory; to which may be added, that this shows that Christ does not love in word only, saying, “I love them that love me”, (^{<1087>}Proverbs 8:17); but in deed also; and how much he esteems the love of his people; and it is designed to encourage the faith and hope of weak believers, who, though they do not so strongly believe in Christ, yet truly love him. And be it further observed, that this substance is enjoyed by way of inheritance; it is not purchased, nor acquired, but bequeathed and given to the children of God by their heavenly Father, and comes to them through the death of Christ the testator, and is for ever, as inheritances are; and so Aben Ezra observes, that it signifies an eternal possession;

and I will fill their treasures; the treasures of their hearts, (^{<4125>}Matthew 12:35); Christ now fills their understandings with spiritual knowledge, their souls with grace, their minds with peace and joy, and their hearts with food and gladness; and hereafter he will fill them to full satisfaction with knowledge, holiness, and joy, and will be all in all to them.

Ver. 22. *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way*, etc.] Not “created me”, as the Targum and the Septuagint version; which version Arius following gave birth to his pernicious doctrine; who from hence concluded Christ is a creature, and was the first creature that God made, not of the same but of a like nature with himself, in some moment or period of eternity; and by whom he made all others: the Word, or Wisdom of God is never said to be created; and if as such he was created, God must have

been without his Wisdom before he was created; besides, Christ, as the Word and Wisdom of God, is the Creator of all things, and not created, (^{<800>}John 1:1-3); but this possession is not in right of creation, as the word is sometimes used, (^{<000>}Genesis 4:1 ^{<0506>}Deuteronomy 32:6); it might be more truly rendered, “the Lord begat me”, as the word is translated by the Septuagint in (^{<3035>}Zechariah 13:5); it denotes the Lord’s having, possessing, and enjoying his word and wisdom as his own proper Son; which possession of him is expressed by his being with him and in him, and in his bosom, and as one brought forth and brought up by him; as he was “in the beginning of his way” of creation, when he went forth in his wisdom and power, and created all things; then he did possess his Son, and made use of him, for by him he made the worlds: and “in the beginning of his way” of grace, which was before his way of creation; he began with him when he first went out in acts of grace towards his people; his first thoughts, purposes, and decrees concerning their happiness, were in him; the choice of their persons was made in him; God was in him contriving the scheme of their peace, reconciliation, and salvation; the covenant of grace was made with him, and all fulness of grace was treasured up in him: the words may be rendered, “the Lord possessed me, the beginning of his way”^{á}; that is, who am the beginning, as he is; the beginning of the creation of God, the first cause, the efficient of it, both old and new; see (^{<5008>}Colossians 1:18 ^{<6004>}Revelation 3:14). So Aben Ezra, who compares with this (^{<8009>}Job 40:19). This shows the real and actual existence of Christ from eternity, his relation to Jehovah his Father, his nearness to him, equality with him, and distinction from him: it is added, for further illustration and confirmation’s sake,

before his works of old; the creation of the heavens and the earth; a detail of which there is in the following verses.

Ver. 23. *I was set up from everlasting*, etc.] I, a person, and not a quality; a person, and not a nature; the person of Christ as the Son of God, and not the human nature of Christ, which then did not exist; this phrase designs the ordination and constitution of Christ in his office as Mediator. So the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “I was ordained”; Christ was foreordained to be the Redeemer and Saviour of men, to be the propitiation for their sins, to be the head of the church, and the Judge of the world. It intends likewise his inauguration into his office, and his investiture with it; and because anointing with oil was used in installing persons into the offices of prophet, priest, and king; hence Christ’s instalment into his office as

Mediator is here expressed by an anointing; for the words may be rendered, “I was anointed”^{f226}; it takes in all that goes to his constitution as Mediator, his call, appointment, and investiture; and the whole of his office, every part and branch of it; and chiefly his kingly office, with reference to which the same word is used (^{<4916>}Psalm 2:6); and so Gersom paraphrases it,

“and there were given to me power, dominion, and greatness;”

all which suppose the eternity of his person; for had he not existed from everlasting, he could not have been set up, and anointed as Mediator, or invested with his office as such;

from the beginning, or ever the earth was; or from the first of the earth, or the original of it; that is, before all time, before the earth or anything was created; this further confirms the eternal existence of Christ’s person, the antiquity of his office, the early provision of grace in him as Mediator for his people, and may lead to entertain high and honourable thoughts of him.

Ver. 24. *When [there were] no depths, I was brought forth*, etc.] Not only in the decree of God, as the head of the elect; foreordained to be the Redeemer of them, and to be the propitiation for their sins; and appointed the Judge of the world, and heir of all things; but “was begotten”, as the Targum and Syriac version; the Septuagint is, “he begot me”; and so it is to be understood of the eternal generation and sonship of Christ; for the word *ytllwj* is used of generation, (^{<4857>}Job 15:7 ^{<4956>}Psalm 51:5). Christ is the firstborn of every creature, begotten, born, and brought forth before any creature was in being; (see ^{<4907>}Psalm 2:7); before the depths of the great sea were formed, for they were made by him, (^{<4981>}Psalm 95:1,5); when there were no depths, but the infinite being and perfections of God, and the thoughts and purposes of his heart, which are his deep things, (^{<4810>}Job 11:7,8 ^{<4925>}Psalm 92:5 ^{<4121>}1 Corinthians 2:10);

when [there were] no fountains abounding with water; or “heavy”, or “honoured”^{f227} with it; when the fountains of the great deep were not; and when there were no other fountains which form rivers, and water the earth; when there were none but God the fountain of living waters; then was Christ as the only begotten son of God; and who was also set up as the fountain of all grace, life, and salvation for his people.

Ver. 25. *Before the mountains were settled*, etc.] “Plunged”^{f228}, or fixed in the earth; and which was done by the great strength of the Lord, upon their

proper bases, (^{<1816>}Psalm 65:6); and which were “aborigine”, or from the beginning of the world, and therefore called the ancient mountains, (^{<1835>}Deuteronomy 33:15); to be before the mountains is a periphrasis of eternity, and is a phrase expressive of God’s eternity; and being here used of the Son’s, shows his eternity is the same with his Father’s, (^{<1816>}Psalm 90:2);

before the hills was I brought forth; which is repeated partly to show the importance of it; this being a matter of infinite moment and concern, and deserving of the strictest attention and observation; and partly to show the certainty of it; the eternal generation of Christ being an article of faith most surely to be believed.

Ver. 26. *While as yet he had not made the earth*, etc.] That is, the Lord, who possessed Wisdom, or Christ, and by whom he was set up; he as yet had not made the earth, when this was done; this shows that the earth had a beginning, contrary to those philosophers who asserted the eternity of it; that Christ was before that was, for it was made by him; and consequently he must be eternal, and was before any man was, since the earth was made before man; and that he was not of the earth, earthy, as was the first man;

nor the fields; the plain parts of the earth, in opposition to the mountains and hills before mentioned; the valleys and meadows that lay between them, full of grass, flowers, and fruits; pleasant to behold, and profitable to be enjoyed; so the word is also rendered (^{<1850>}Job 5:10); and “valleys”, by the Targum here: or the “out parts”^{f229}; the extremities of the earth, the two poles of it; the uninhabitable parts of the earth, as distinct from the habitable part of it afterwards mentioned: or all with out it; the ambient and spacious ether;

nor the highest part of the dust of the world: meaning, not the mountains and hills, which are before mentioned, and are the highest part of the earth; but rather “the chief of the dust of the earth”^{f230}, as the words may be rendered; these are the metals and minerals within it; the gold, silver, and precious stones, of which we read very early, (^{<1812>}Genesis 2:12); or the “beginning”, the first and chief, the “prima materia”, even the dusts of the world, out of which man and all the creatures were made, (^{<1815>}Genesis 2:6 3:19 ^{<1849>}Job 4:19 ^{<1810>}Ecclesiastes 3:20 12:7). Dr. Lister^{f231} was of opinion that sand was once the most exterior and general cover of the surface of the whole earth; partly because all our northern mountains are covered with it, more or less, at this day; and partly because of its great hardness,

durableness, and unalterable quality; and the higher the mountains be, he says, still the more and coarser the sand is; and if so, this might with propriety be called the highest part of the dust of the earth. But Christ was before any of them, as well as is more excellent than they. Or it may be man is designed, who was made of the dust of the earth; even the first man Adam, so Jarchi, (^{<OC17>}Genesis 2:7); before whom Christ was: yea, the human nature of Christ himself may be meant, which is fairer than any of the children of men, and the chief of all the individuals of human nature; being without sin, and united to the Son of God, and also the curious workmanship of the Spirit of God. Now Christ, as the Son of God, as the only begotten of the Father, existed before his human nature did, or before he was the Son of man.

Ver. 27. *When he prepared the heavens, I [was] there*, etc.] Made, beautified, and adorned them; when he gave them their form, figure, magnitude, and motion; when he garnished them with the sun, moon, and stars; then was Christ present, not as a mere spectator, but as a co-worker; (see ^{<S110>}Hebrews 1:10); and even the third heaven, the place and state of glorified saints, prepared for them from the foundation of the world, (^{<A254>}Matthew 25:34);

when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: or “compassed the waters with bounds”, as Job says, (^{<B50>}Proverbs 26:10); or made the earth with the sea globular, which make one terraqueous globe: or “made a circle”^{f232}; all around it, called the circle of the earth, on which he sits, (^{<A12>}Isaiah 40:22); this compass may design the vast expanse or firmament of heaven, which is stretched and drawn around the terraqueous globe as a canopy or curtain. Christ was with his Father on the first day’s creation of the heavens; and on the second day, when the firmament was made, and was before them both.

Ver. 28. *When he established the clouds above*, etc.] In which the waters are bound, and yet are not rent under them; and where, in the thin air, they hang heavy with them; where they are weighed by measure, and a decree made for them when they shall fall; and when they do, the Lord makes small the drops of water, which the clouds do drop and distil on men abundantly; the spreadings of which are beyond understanding, and are unaccountable, and must be referred to the power of God; who has settled and established them in the heavens, and the laws of them, (^{<B88>}Job 26:8 28:25,26 38:28,29);

when he strengthened the fountains of the deep; gave them strength, and still continues it, to cast out their waters, which run into the main sea, and feed and fill it, and return to their place again; which strength of flowing and reflowing can be attributed to nothing else but to the great power of God, (^{<0071>}Genesis 7:11 ^{<2007>}Ecclesiastes 1:7).

Ver. 29. *When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment*, etc.] A perpetual decree, which never has been altered nor never will: he has placed the sand for the bounds of the sea everywhere, which it cannot pass, though its waves toss, foam, and roar; this is his decreed place, with which he has shut it up, as with doors, bars, and bolts; so that those proud waves may come hitherto and no further, (^{<2162>}Jeremiah 5:22 ^{<1880>}Job 38:10,11);

when he appointed the foundations of the earth; which are laid on the seas and floods; nay, the earth is hung like a ball in the air upon nothing; and yet its foundations are such as that it shall not be removed; being the purpose and decree, the power and might, of the Lord himself, (^{<1847>}Job 26:7 ^{<4242>}Psalms 24:2 104:5). Now Christ was present when those were laid, for he was concerned in the laying of them himself, (^{<8010>}Hebrews 1:10). The Lord asks Job where he was then, (^{<1880>}Job 38:4); he was not theft in being, but Christ was.

Ver. 30. *Then I was by him, [as] one brought up [with him]*, etc.] He was then, and from all eternity, “by him”, or “with him”^{f233}; which denotes his co-existence with God, and his relation to him as his Father; his nearness to him, his equality with him, and his distinction from him: he was by him when the names of God’s elect were put down in the book of life; he was by him and with him in the council and covenant of grace and peace; and so in the creation of all things, and has been ever since; not as a onlooker, but as a party concerned; and not as subordinate and inferior to his Father, but equal with him. The word $\hat{w}ma$, translated “brought up”, is differently rendered; Symmachus and Theodotion render it “strengthened”; as Christ was set up in his mediatorial office, he was strengthened in it by his Father; and was in his view, council, and covenant, the man of his right hand, made strong for himself: the Targum renders it “faithful”, so the Tigurine version; as Christ was to him that appointed him, faithful to all he promised and was intrusted with. Many translate it an “artificer” or “workman”^{f234}, as $\hat{m}a$ in (^{<2001>}Song of Solomon 7:1); and so Christ was a co-worker, a worker with God in the making of all things, the heavens, earth, and sea,

and all in there; not as an instrument, but as a co-efficient cause of them; which is a proof of his proper deity, and equality with God. But others think the word has the sense of nursing, or being nursed, educated, or brought up. Some ^{f235} take it actively, as in (⁰⁸⁰¹⁶Ruth 4:16) (⁰⁷⁰¹⁷Esther 2:7 ²³⁴²³Isaiah 49:23); and interpret it of Christ's nursing the creation, or cherishing, supporting, and preserving all creatures in their being when made; particularly of his nourishing and cherishing the church and people of God committed to his care. Others ^{f236} passively, of his being "brought up", as our version; and so the Latin interpreter of the Targum renders it "nursed up at his side"; which expresses the tender regard of his Father to him, as his begotten Son; in whose bosom he lay and was bore, as a nursing father bears his son in his bosom, (⁰⁴¹¹²Numbers 11:12); and by whom, as Mediator, he was trained up in the performance of his office;

and I was daily his delight; or "delights"^{f237}; exceeding delightful to him. The Father loved the Son from all eternity, with a love of complacency and delight, (⁰⁸¹⁷⁴John 17:24 ⁰⁴¹¹⁷Matthew 3:17); this delight was founded in relation to him, in sonship; and in likeness, he being the express image of his person; in sameness of nature, he being of the same nature and perfections with his Father: and he delighted in him as a workman, in the works which he did, being the same he saw him do; and in him as Mediator, in his constitution as such, and in engaging as a surety, to obey and suffer in the stead of his people, (²³⁰¹¹Isaiah 42:1); he not only delighted in him day by day, throughout the six days of the creation, when he was by him as a workman, but before, and even from the days of eternity; from the date of his commencement as Mediator; in the foreviews of his human nature, obeying and suffering in it; and of the salvation of the elect by him, and of his own glory in it;

rejoicing always before him; being always in his presence, and acceptable to him; rejoicing in having the same nature and perfections with him, and in the relation he stood in to him; and also in the view of the works of creation and redemption he would be jointly concerned in with him; which joy always did and ever will continue. There is a mutual pleasure and delight which the Father and Son have in each other, and in all that they are concerned; and especially in what respects the salvation of the chosen people. The allusion in the word used in this clause is to children's playing in the presence of their parents; which is a diversion to the one, and a pleasure to the other.

Ver. 31. *Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth,* etc.] In that part of the earth which is habitable; in filling it with inhabitants; in preserving and sustaining it in being, and the inhabitants of it; in governing it, and ordering all things in it for the best, according to his infinite wisdom and the counsel of his will; in bestowing the bounties of his providence, and in being the light and life of men: all which were done by him with the greatest ease, as well as pleasure and delight; it was a kind of sport or play unto him, as the word used signifies^{f238}; and so in (^{<2080>}Proverbs 8:30), which shows the allusion is to a nurse child. Moreover, this may have a peculiar view to the saints and people of God, and to those particular spots of ground in God's earth where they should dwell; for as the earth was made, and is continued on their account; so the very place of their birth and abode, as well as of their conversion, were afore appointed and fixed by the Lord, which Christ in his eternal mind had a foreview of, and took a pleasure in: besides, they themselves are the habitation of God, and Christ, and the blessed Spirit; the church of God is his dwelling place on earth, where he delights to dwell, over whom he rejoices to do good, and whom he makes glad; so some read the words, "making glad the habitable part of his earth"^{f239}. Once more, the new earth, which will be after this is passed, away, may be truly called his, or the second Adam's earth; and in which only righteous persons shall dwell, and with whom the tabernacle of God shall be, or with whom Christ shall dwell a thousand years; and in the foreview of this he may be thought to take delight and pleasure, even before the world was. The human nature of Christ may not be amiss thought of, which was formed in the lower parts of the earth, and therefore he is called the fruit of the earth, (^{<2095>}Psalm 139:15) (^{<2092>}Isaiah 4:2); and may be said to be habitable, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells, and the Word tabernacled, and is the true tabernacle; in the foreview of which the Son of God rejoiced, as to be produced without sin by the Holy Spirit, and adorned with his graces, and to be united to his person; in which he was to work out the salvation of his people, and be glorified; and his, joy, in the foreview of it, appears by his frequent appearances in a human form before his actual incarnation, as "preludiums" of it;

and my delights [were] with the sons of men; or of Adam, of fallen Adam; not with angels, but with men; not with all men, only some; and those as considered as the objects of his own and his Father's love; as beheld in the glass of his Father's decrees; as chosen in him, and given him by his Father; as his children, and as his spouse and bride. The word for "delights" is not

only in the plural number, but its two first radical letters are doubled, which, in the Hebrew language, increases the signification of the word; and so expresses the exceeding great delight and pleasure which Christ took in his people from everlasting; his love was then a love of the utmost complacency and delight, and continued, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, though by nature children of wrath, and transgressors from the womb. This appears by his early engagement as a surety for them; by his espousing their persons and their cause; by assuming their nature in time; by suffering and dying in their room and stead, and working out salvation for them; by bearing them on his heart in heaven, and there interceding for them; by taking them out of a state of nature; by visiting them with his grace and presence; and by bringing them, through a variety of trials, safe to his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 32. *Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children,* etc.] Children of his and his Father, with whom his delights were; predestinated to the adoption of children; children of the covenant and promise, given to him as such in the covenant; for whom he became man, suffered and died, to gather together regenerated ones, by which they appear to be the children of God: these Wisdom here addresses in the most affectionate manner; Christ, having finished the account and description of himself, reassumes his former exhortation, (^{208B}Proverbs 8:5-10); and enforces it by the several particulars in the above description. From the consideration of his wisdom, riches, eternity, nearness to God, and his delights with men, he exhorts them to “hearken” to him, to his voice in the Gospel, and to what he says there; such who see themselves lost and perishing, the hungry and thirsty, the naked and weary, the disconsolate and afflicted, the poor and indigent; and also to his voice in his precepts and commands, to embrace his doctrines, and submit to his ordinances;

for blessed [are they that] keep my ways; it is a happiness to be in the ways of Christ, to be kept in them, and to keep them; Christ has promised and does vouchsafe his presence in them; there is a pleasure enjoyed in observing them; and though not for keeping, yet in keeping Christ’s commands, there is great reward, (^{199B}Psalms 19:11).

Ver. 33. *Hear instruction,* etc.] The instruction of wisdom, the Gospel of Christ; which instructs men in things relating to God the Father; as that he is the God and Father of his people, the God of all grace, the giver and sender of Christ, and all good things by him; in things respecting Christ, his

person, office, grace, and righteousness; in things that appertain to the Spirit of God, his deity, personality, and operations of grace on the souls of men; in the knowledge of themselves, their impurity, impotence, and unrighteousness; and in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, and therefore to be hearkened to;

and be wise; this is the way to be wise to that which is good, both as to the knowledge and practice of it; to be wise unto salvation, and with respect to everlasting things and a future state; and the Gospel instruction teaches men to behave wisely, to walk in wisdom towards them that are without;

and refuse it not; for this is not to be wise, but to act the part of fools; and such as do so despise their own souls, show that they have no care of them, or concern for their eternal welfare, (^{<3100>}Proverbs 1:7 15:32); for, if this is rejected, there is no escaping eternal damnation, (^{<3008>}Hebrews 2:3).

Ver. 34. *Blessed [is] the man that heareth me*, etc.] Christ in his Gospel, as speaking by his ministers; for hearing them is hearing him, (^{<2106>}Luke 10:16); they have their commission from him; are his ambassadors, and represent him; receive their gifts from him; speak according to his mind and will, revealed in his word, and preach him himself. This shows with what attention and reverence the Gospel should be heard; what credit should be given unto it; how it ought to be put in practice; this accounts for the efficacy of it on the souls of men, it being no other than the word of Christ, or Christ himself speaking; and from hence it appears how sad and dreadful will be the case of such that despise it: to hear it is the way to have the knowledge of Christ, and an increase of it; faith in Christ, and a growth therein; the joy of faith, and a furtherance of it; love to Christ, and aboundings in it; and to have spiritual food and nourishment; wherefore it is both the duty and privilege of persons to hear the Gospel of Christ, since these things come by it;

watching daily at my gates; the gates of Wisdom's house, the church of Christ, which are the public ordinances thereof; called in Scripture the gates of Zion, (^{<3800>}Psalms 87:2); in allusion to the gates of cities, where Wisdom cries, or the ministers of Christ preach, (^{<3102>}Proverbs 1:21 8:3); see (^{<2301>}Isaiah 26:1,2); or to the gates of kings, palaces, where courtiers watch to be admitted and received as favourites, or to give in their petitions for themselves or others, (^{<1760>}Esther 6:10). The church is the palace of the great King; it is an honour to be admitted here, to have a name and a place here, and to sit with the King at his table. Or to the door

of the tabernacle, where the people of Israel assembled for worship; or to the gates of the temple, where the priests and Levites watched, (^{<129B>}Exodus 29:42 ^{<1940B>}Psalms 100:4 122:2). “Watching” is opposed to sleep, both to bodily sleep and to sleepy frames of soul; and to intemperance, not only by eating and drinking, but with the cares of this life; and it denotes circumspection, diligence, and attention. Here sensible sinners watch in the ministry of the word and ordinances, if anything drops that they can catch at, suitable to their case and circumstances; as Benhadad’s servants did, (^{<121B>}1 Kings 20:33); and here souls, under darkness and desertion, watch for spiritual light and comfort, as they that watch for the morning; and here every believer watches for his spiritual edification and establishment in the truth; and which should be “daily” or “day after day”, one Lord’s day after another; taking all opportunities, in season and out of season, consistent with the duties of their calling, to hear the word; and so they are to continue to the end of life; for happy is he that shall be found thus watching when his Lord cometh, (^{<10237>}Luke 12:37);

waiting at the posts of my doors; either in allusion to scholars, who wait the opening of the school doors to go in first, as Jarchi observes: Christ is a teacher; sensible souls are his disciples or scholars; the church is the school where they learn of him, and learn him; and waiting at the door posts of it shows early seeking to Christ, and eagerness for instruction from him, (^{<1213B>}Luke 21:38). Or the allusion may be to clients, waiting at the doors of counsellors^{f240}, for counsel, and for patronage and protection, to plead their cause for them; Christ is the wonderful Counsellor, the Advocate with the Father, the Redeemer, mighty and strong, to plead the cause of his people; and therefore it is right to wait at his doors, with whom are counsel and sound wisdom: or else to beggars, that wait at the door for alms; who knock, and wait until the door is opened; tell their case, and wait for relief; receive repulses, and wait still; and will not depart till something is given. So saints should wait at the throne of grace, and upon the word and ordinances, for answers of prayer, performance of promises, and the presence of God and Christ: and so should sinners wait on the outward ministry of the word, remembering the ease of the poor man at the pool, who waited long, and at last had a cure, (^{<1115B>}John 5:5-7); since faith comes hereby; the Spirit and his graces, Christ and the knowledge of him, are had by such means, as follows.

Ver. 35. *For whoso findeth me findeth life*, etc.] Of finding Christ, (see Gill on “^{<2183B>}Proverbs 3:13”). Such that find Christ find “life” or “lives”^{f241},

life spiritual and eternal; till they are found of Christ, and find him in effectual calling, they are dead; but, when called by his grace and converted, they live a life of justification and sanctification; they live a life of faith on Christ, of holiness from him, and communion with him: and such that find life in this sense find spiritual food in and from Christ, to support this life; and spiritual clothing, a justifying righteousness, called the justification of life, and which is the comfort of it; and rest in him, which makes life pleasant and delightful. Such an one finds that which of all things is most valuable, the life of his immortal soul; and which he can find nowhere else; and which, being found, can never be lost, for he finds eternal life in him; and has both a right unto it, and a meetness for it; yea, has the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it, (^{<1051>}1 John 5:11,12);

and shall obtain favour of the Lord; by which is meant, not favour among men, though that is had from the Lord, it is he that gives it; nor temporal blessings, for in this sense favour is not to men of spiritual skill and wisdom; rather spiritual blessings, an access to God, acceptance with him; the presence of God, and communion with him; peace of conscience, and every needful supply of grace: but it seems most principally to design the love, grace, and good will of God, the spring and fountain of all blessings: and “obtaining” it does not intend getting an interest in it, for that is free and sovereign; nor is there anything in men, or done by them, which can procure it; but an enjoyment of it. The word^{f242} used signifies a drawing it out, as water out of a well; and denotes that it is before it is drawn out or manifested; that it is in the heart of God, and lies hid there, from whence it flows as from a well or fountain; and is enjoyed in the exercise of the grace of faith; when the Lord remembers his people, and encompasses them about with it; or draws it out in great lengths, or grants continued and comfortable manifestations of it; (see ^{<1050>}Psalms 36:10).

Ver. 36. *But he that sinneth against me*, etc.] Or misses the mark, as the word^{f243} signifies; and which is observed by Aben Ezra; see (^{<1046>}Judges 20:16). Christ is the mark and scope of the counsels of God; of the covenant of grace; of the Scriptures; of the Gospel, the truths and promises of it; of the graces of the Spirit, and of all spiritual duties and services; and to whom we are to look for heaven and eternal happiness, (^{<1084>}Philippians 3:14); and such miss the mark who look for salvation elsewhere, either by the light of nature; or by the law of Moses; or by any moral performances, or any religious exercises; or by a mere profession of religion, even the best. The word is frequently used for sinning; which is an aberration or

straying from, or missing, the mark of the law. Some sin against Christ doctrinally, who say he is not come in the flesh, or that Jesus is not the Christ; who deny his proper deity, his divine and eternal Sonship; and treat his blood, righteousness and salvation, with any degree of contempt: they sin against him practically that slight his Gospel, neglect his ordinances, transgress his laws, and evilly treat his people. Sinning against him is very aggravating; it is against him in whom all grace and mercy is, and from whom it comes to the sons of men; who is the Saviour of men from sin, and in whom alone salvation is. Wherefore everyone that thus sins against him

wrongeth his own soul; is injurious to it, and to the spiritual and eternal welfare of it; all sin is hurtful to the souls of men, especially sins against Christ; since there is no other Saviour but him, no other sacrifice for sin but his; and therefore to such there can be no other than a fearful looking for of judgment, that trample him under foot, and treat his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, in a contemptuous manner, (^{scribes} Hebrews 10:26-29);

all they that hate me; as do the seed of the serpent, the whole world that lies in wickedness, all unregenerate persons, and even many professors of religion; they hate him privately, being without love to him, or loving others more than him; and positively and practically, by despising his Gospel, or not walking worthy of it; by disclaiming doctrines, casting off his yoke, and maltreating his people; all which arise from the corruption of their nature; for this hatred or enmity is original and natural; it is deeply rooted in their minds, and irreconcilable without the grace of God, and is always undeserved. Wherefore such are said to

love death; not formally and intentionally, for death in any shape cannot be desirable; not a corporeal death, and much less an eternal one; but interpretatively and consequentially, as they love that which brings death upon them both in body and soul, and so are reckoned to love death itself.

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 9

In this chapter, Wisdom, or Christ, is represented as having built a stately house or palace for the entertainment of his guests, (^{3100L}Proverbs 9:1); as having made large and suitable provisions for them, (^{3100E}Proverbs 9:2); and as having sent his servants to invite them to come and partake of them, and quit all other company but his, (^{3100B}Proverbs 9:3-6); When it is observed who are and who are not to be reprov'd, with the reasons of it, (^{3100T}Proverbs 9:7-9); and what is the sum and substance of true wisdom; and what the advantages of it both here and hereafter, (^{3100D}Proverbs 9:10-12); And the chapter is concluded with the description of the foolish woman, the opposite of Wisdom; who is represented as clamorous, simple, and ignorant, (^{3100S}Proverbs 9:13); and plying passengers that go by her door, and inviting them in to partake of her provisions, (^{3100A}Proverbs 9:14-17); the consequence of which is sure and certain death and destruction to her guests, (^{3100R}Proverbs 9:18).

Ver. 1. *Wisdom hath builded her house*, etc.] Or “Wisdoms”: of which see (^{3100D}Proverbs 1:20); Christ, the Wisdom of God, is meant, in whom and from whom all wisdom is. Various are the opinions concerning this house built by him. Some take it to be the whole circle of sciences, and the seven pillars to be the seven liberal ones, as Aben Ezra; though rather, as others, it may design the schools of the prophets, in which young men were trained up in the knowledge of divine and spiritual things. Some would have the whole universe to be meant, and the seven pillars to be the seven days of creation, as Jarchi; or the seven planets, as others: it is an odd notion of Grotius, that the human body is intended, with its five senses; and, to make up the number seven, adds the voice and memory: rather the human nature of Christ, which is a temple, a tabernacle, a house in which the Godhead dwells, is built by Wisdom, made without the hands of men; and then its seven pillars are the graces of the Spirit, by which it was supported and adorned; see (^{3100D}Isaiah 11:2); Some understand it of the temple of a regenerate man’s heart; in which God, Father, Son and Spirit, dwell. But there are two other senses, which bid fairest one of them to be right; either

the heavenly glory, the house not made with hands, Christ's Father's house, in which are many mansions for his people; and which is a city whose builder and maker is God, and is prepared by Christ; and stands firm upon the promises of God, the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and the grace of the blessed Spirit: or rather the church of Christ on earth, the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth; this is built by Christ upon himself, the rock and foundation; the materials of it are true believers, precious and lively stones; built up a spiritual house, and a fit and suitable habitation for God through the Spirit. Such a house there was under the Old Testament, and such an one there is under the New; and which is continually building up by Christ by means of the word and ordinances, and will continue to the end of the world; (see ^{<408>}1 Timothy 3:15 ^{<408>}Matthew 16:18 ^{<412>}1 Peter 2:5 ^{<412>}Hebrews 3:6);

she hath hewn out her seven pillars; ministers of the Gospel, compared to pillars for strength and stability, and for their being instrumental in supporting the interest and church of Christ; in allusion to the pillars in Solomon's temple, Jachin and Boaz; (see ^{<409>}Galatians 2:9 ^{<412>}1 Kings 7:21). These are said to be "hewn", being polished, beautified, and adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit by Christ, and thereby fitted for their work and service; and said to be "seven", because there is a complete and sufficient number of them, which Christ has provided, and always will provide for his churches, as long as they continue in the world. Though it may be these seven pillars may denote in general the firmness and solidity of this spiritual building, the church, and the continuance of it by the power of God; or they may have respect to the seven states of the church in so many periods of time, to last to the end of all things, signified by the seven churches in the book of the Revelation; so Cocceius^{f244}.

Ver. 2. *She hath killed her beasts*, etc.] Or, "her sacrifice"^{f245}: a crucified Christ, the principal of the provisions in Wisdom's house, or the church of Christ. The death of Christ was prefigured by the slaying of beasts for sacrifice under the old law; was foretold in prophecy, and is expressed by "killing" him in the New Testament; and which shows his death not to be natural, but violent. It is commonly ascribed to the Jews as a wicked action of theirs; but was not without the counsel and determination of God, and the will and consent of Christ; and this death was as a victim to justice, by way of sacrifice and satisfaction for sin, and was vicarious; was offered up in the room and stead of his people, to make atonement for their sins; and which is no other than himself, his soul and body, as in union with his

divine person; a sacrifice voluntarily offered up by himself, exceeding acceptable, and well pleasing to God; effectual to the purposes for which it was offered, and so never to be repeated: and his death, being a sacrifice, becomes a feast; a crucified Christ is suitable food for faith, as he is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as though he had been slain; he is evidently set forth in the Gospel as crucified, and as such is spiritual and savoury food to his people, nourishing and strengthening, quickening and comforting, and extremely satisfying: thus the Gospel feast, in which the slain Lamb of God makes the chiefest part, is expressed in the same language as here, “my oxen and my fatlings are killed”, (^(217b) Matthew 22:4);

she hath mingled her wine; which also makes a considerable part in a banquet or feast, (^(178b) Esther 5:6); and the church is called a banqueting house, or a house of wine, (^(210b) Song of Solomon 2:4). The love of Christ is compared to wine, (^(210b) Song of Solomon 1:2,4); to old wine for the antiquity of it, being more ancient than ours to him, or than ourselves, even as old as eternity; to wine, on the lees well refined, for the purity of it, being free from all motives and conditions in the creature; to strong generous wine, which exhilarates and refreshes the weak, the weary, and distressed. The Gospel of Christ is also compared to wine, (^(210b) Song of Solomon 7:9); to old wine, for the ancient doctrines of it; and to neat wine, for the purity of it; and to generous wine, for the pleasure, joy, and comfort it gives: the blessings of grace which it exhibits may be so called from their comforting and refreshing nature, which are had freely, (^(210b) Isaiah 55:1); and so are the joys of heaven, (^(165b) Matthew 26:29). Now the “mingling” of this wine is in allusion to the mixture of wine, either with something richer, as spice, (^(210b) Song of Solomon 8:2); or rather with water, as Jarchi observes, which was usual in those hot countries, to make it fit and suitable drink for the bodies of men: the mixture was no doubt according to the strength of the wine; the wine of Sharon, being strong wine, was mixed two parts water and one wine^{f246}; which, with the ancients^{f247}, before three parts water and two wine; though, according to Plutarch^{f248}, they had three ways of mixing, which they called by three different names; the one was three parts water and two wine, the other three parts water and one wine, the third was one wine and two water; the first of them was reckoned the best mixture^{f249}: one Cerassus is said to be the inventor of mixing wine with water^{f250}; others ascribe it to Melampus^{f251}, and others to Amphictyon. And this, spiritually understood, does not design any impurity or degeneracy, such as is complained of, (^(210b) Isaiah 1:22); for the love of

Christ is pure and sovereign; the Gospel of Christ is free of all mixtures of human doctrines; the blessings of grace are all of free grace, without the mixture of men's works, and so is eternal life; salvation is all of free grace, and not by works of righteousness done by men mixed with it. But this may design the various displays of the love of Christ in the several acts of it, before time, in time, and now in heaven; or the joint display of the love of Father, Son, and Spirit, in the salvation of men, and the harmony and agreement of the divine perfections therein; and the publication of the Gospel, and the accommodation of the truths of it to the capacities of men: and perhaps some respect may be had to the blood and water that issued from the side of the slain Lamb of God, here prophetically and figuratively held forth;

she hath also furnished her table; which seems to design the ministration of the word, and the administration of ordinances in Gospel times; especially the ordinance of the supper, called the table of the Lord, (~~ACT~~ 1 Corinthians 10:21); a well-furnished table has a variety of excellent provision upon it: and such is the ministry of the Gospel, which is signified by various sorts of food, as bread, meat, milk, honey, and delicious fruits; and Christ, who is the sum and substance of it, is expressed by several things that are eatable, as by a slain lamb, a fatted calf, the hidden manna, the bread of God and of life, whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; and so is he held forth in the ordinances, particularly in the ordinance of the supper; the same he sits at, and welcomes his guests; encourages them to eat and drink, and sups with them himself. Here his broken body, and his blood shed, are presented to the faith of his people, to be eaten and drank in a spiritual manner; a table richly furnished indeed!

Ver. 3. *She hath sent forth her maidens*, etc.] Not moral virtues, or good works, which subserve the interest of Christ and religion, adorn the Gospel and its professors; nor the liberal arts and sciences, said to be handmaids to divinity; nor angels, ministering spirits to Christ; but the ministers of the Gospel, who being so called does not suppose or encourage women's preaching; but have the name to keep up the decency of the parable, and the propriety of the allegory: for since Wisdom is represented as a lady, a princess or queen, it is proper that her attendants should be maidens, or that she should employ such in inviting her guests; as Rebekah, Pharaoh's daughter, Esther, and others, are said to have their maidens to wait upon them: and besides, it very fitly expresses the character of Gospel ministers; as that they are the servants of Christ, followers of him, obsequious to him,

humble and modest, incorrupt in doctrine, pure in conversation, and whose voice is soft, pleasant, and delightful: being not the rough voice of the law, but the still, small, musical voice of the Gospel; a voice of love, grace, and mercy; of peace, pardon, and righteousness, liberty, life, and salvation; very charming, alluring, and drawing. These Christ has a property in; he chooses and calls them, and fits them for his service; and they give up themselves to him, and willingly engage in it. And these he “sends forth”: from him they have their mission and commission to preach the Gospel; to invite persons to the Gospel feast, to partake of the provisions he has made: he sends them forth publicly into the world, into all places where his people are, into the streets and lanes; yea, to the hedges and highways, to invite, and even to compel them to come in. And this supposes superiority in him, and authority given to them;

she crieth upon the high places of the city; this is to be understood of the preaching of the Gospel, both by Christ himself in person, in the city of Jerusalem, in the temple, and other public places; and by his ministers, and by him speaking in them there or elsewhere; and which is not a mere whisper, but a cry, a proclamation made aloud, and to be delivered with fervency and earnestness: the “city” may mean the church of God, and the “highest places” the ordinances thereof; and may in general denote the publicness of them; which are in the church, as the wings or pinnacles of the higher parts or buildings of a city are in that, as the word^{f252} signifies.

Ver. 4. *Whoso [is] simple, let him turn in hither*, etc.] Into Wisdom’s house, so well built and furnished; the church of Christ, as a house of instruction; a school, where such who are “simple”, weak, and foolish, may learn. Here are many instructors; saints instruct one another; ministers of the word are teachers; yea, Father, Son, and Spirit, here teach and instruct, and none teach like them. Here many lessons are to be learned concerning themselves, concerning Christ, and concerning their duty to God and men; all sorts of persons may learn here, such who know ever so much or ever so little. Or let him turn in here, as into an inn, into which passengers or travellers turn for accommodations; (see ^{<119>}Proverbs 9:15,16). The saints are travellers here, at a distance from their Father’s house, and need refreshment by the way; the church of God is an inn of good accommodations; here is room enough to entertain them; here are good lodgings for rest and safety, and good provisions, and all of free cost. And now these are the words of Wisdom, or Christ, either in person, or by his maidens, his ministers, inviting such who are “simple” to turn in hither, and

partake of the provisions in it; that is, not such who are quite stupid and insensible, sottish, incorrigible, and irreclaimable; but who are sensible of their folly and simplicity; who are but of weak capacities, apt to be credulous, and so easily imposed upon and deceived;

[as for] him that wanteth understanding; not the natural faculty of the understanding, nor an understanding of things natural and civil; but of things spiritual and evangelical, as of the grace of God; of salvation by Christ; of the work of the Spirit; of themselves and their state; of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; and who are sensible of their ignorance and want of understanding; which is the first thing the Spirit of God convinces men of; or who are so in comparison of others, are weak in knowledge and experience. Now these Christ does not despise, but invites them into his house for instruction; and where can they be better? and who so fit and proper to be here, and be with Wisdom, than such as these?

she saith to him: as follows.

Ver. 5. *Come, eat of my bread*, etc.] Which stands for all the provisions of Christ's house; it designs the Gospel, which to a believer is more than his necessary food; and the ordinance of the supper, one of the symbols of which is bread; and more especially Christ himself, the bread of God, the living bread that came down from heaven, which is to be eaten by faith; and this only, for everything else is that which is not bread; and this daily, as the Israelites ate their manna; this is the believer's daily bread; and largely and freely, to which they are welcome by Christ; and with gladness and singleness of heart, joyfully and with sincerity;

and drink of the wine [which] I have mingled; of the love of Christ; or of the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit, which meet and mingle together: to "drink" of this is to partake of it by faith, and be persuaded of interest in it; this may be drank largely of, for there is enough, a river of it; and without danger, it is not intoxicating as wine, wherein is excess; and it may be had freely, without money and without price, (²⁷⁰⁰Song of Solomon 1:2,4 5:1 ²⁸⁰⁰Isaiah 55:1).

Ver. 6. *Forsake the foolish*, etc.] Foolish men and their company; not men of weak abilities in things natural and civil, or who are reckoned foolish by the world; for so the saints are, whose company is not to be neglected and forsaken; but such who are wickedly foolish, who are ignorant of divine things, and make a mock at sin and at religion; such company is very

unsuitable for Wisdom's guests; such as turn in to her house ought to forsake these; it is quite out of character for Wisdom's followers to be the companions of fools; it is very unprofitable to keep company with such vain men, yea, very pernicious and hurtful, and of very bad consequence; it corrupts good manners, and causes grief, and breaks peace, sooner or later; it is quite unbecoming them to converse with them; they are called out from among them by Christ, and should obey: and, besides, they have better company to attend unto: and they should also forsake "foolish"^{f253} things; the Septuagint version renders it, "foolishness"; and the Arabic version, "imprudence"; the Targum and Syriac version, "want of understanding", or "judgment"; foolish lusts, which are hurtful, and war against the soul, and which should be denied and abstained from; and all foolish ways, their own or others', which are dangerous and lead to ruin; and all foolish doctrines, such as are contrary to the Scriptures, to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; that tend to degrade any of the Persons of the Trinity, to obscure or lessen the grace of God in man's salvation, or to exalt the creature; all such are to be forsaken, shunned, and avoided, and by no means countenanced and encouraged;

and live; which may be considered either as an exhortation, as the foregoing; live on the provisions of Wisdom's house, on her bread and her wine; live on Christ himself by faith; live not as the foolish do, but as the wise; live not to yourselves, nor to the lusts of men, but to the will and glory of God; live not in sin, but unto righteousness; live not to the flesh, nor after it, but to and after the spirit: or as a promise by way of encouragement, and as enforcing the preceding exhortation, "and ye shall live"^{f254}; honourably, and not scandalously, as they do that keep company with the foolish; comfortably and delightfully, as they do that turn into Wisdom's house, and are her guests; such live in communion with Christ, and with his people; they live a spiritual life now, and shall live an eternal one hereafter;

and go in the way of understanding; as such do that quit the conversation of foolish men, and become the guests of Wisdom; such are in, and go in the way of understanding, who frequently attend the throne of grace, and ask wisdom of the Father of lights; the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of divine things, which they that ask have; Solomon got all his wisdom and understanding this way: such are in the way of it, and go in the way of it, who constantly and carefully read the Scriptures, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation; who go up to the house of the

Lord as often as they have opportunity, that they may be taught by trim; who sit under the ministry of Gospel preachers, that feed men with knowledge and understanding; who submit to Gospel ordinances, and keep the commandments of Christ; for such are said to have a good understanding; they show that they have, and by these means get and increase it; see (³¹¹⁰Psalm 111:10 119:104); and who also converse with knowing and experienced Christians; for “he that walketh with wise men shall be wise”, (³¹³⁰Proverbs 13:20).

Ver. 7. *He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame*, etc.]

Intimating, that though the simple, and such as want understanding, and of whom there is hope of doing them good, are to be invited into Wisdom’s house; yet not the haughty scorner, the abandoned sinner, the scoffer at all religion, who walks after his own lusts, and is quite irreclaimable; it is but casting pearls before swine, and giving that which is holy to dogs, to reprove and exhort such persons; though the Gospel is to be preached to every creature, yet when men despise it, and make a mock at it, they are to be turned from, and no more is to be said to them; as the Jews of old, they were the first invited to the Gospel feast, the same that is described in the context; they made light of it, contradicted and blasphemed the word, and so judged themselves unworthy of it; wherefore Wisdom’s maidens, or Christ’s ministers, were bid to turn from them, and go to the Gentiles, and preach it to them; for it is to no purpose to address such persons; “shame” is the sure consequence of it, because a man is disappointed of the end he has in view, which is doing good;

and he that rebuketh a wicked [man getteth] himself a blot; this shows who is meant by a scorner, a very profligate man, bent on his wicked ways, and quite incorrigible; to rebuke such an one is not only labour lost, and in vain, but the rebuker getteth himself an ill name, and is sure to have the dirt of reproach and scandal cast upon him; though this a man might patiently bear, if there was any hope of doing good.

Ver. 8. *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee*, etc.] For wicked men are apt to hate those that publicly rebuke them, (³¹⁵⁰Amos 5:10). Hence minister’s of the word are of all men most hated; though this also should be bore with, could it be thought, or there was any reason to believe, that the reproof would be of any service. The scorner here, and in the preceding verses, may not only design profane sinners, sensualists, and atheists, that despise all religion, and scoff at all that is good; but also proud scornful

Pharisees, such who derided Christ himself, and trusted in themselves, and despised others, Christ and his apostles, and their ministrations, (~~<DIG4>~~Luke 16:14 18:9); and such, as Christ came not to call them himself, so he bid his disciples let them alone, (~~<DIG3>~~Matthew 9:13 15:14);

rebuke a wise [man], and he will love thee; as David did Nathan; and who was determined to take kindly the reproof of any righteous man, (~~<DIG5>~~Psalm 141:5). Such who are spiritually wise will be thankful for the reproof of Gospel ministers, and even of private Christians, and will love and esteem them for their faithfulness and uprightness, and for the good which they themselves receive hereby.

Ver. 9. *Give [instruction] to a wise [man]*, etc.] In the Hebrew text it is only “give to a wise man”; give him reproof, correction, chastisement, doctrine, or instruction, be it what it will, he will be the better for it. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, “give occasion”; to him of showing his wisdom and of improving in it:

and he will be yet wiser; he will learn something by every him that is given him, whether it be by way of rebuke, or by way of instruction;

teach a just [man]; one that is truly so, that has seen the insufficiency of his own righteousness, and has renounced that, and does not trust in it; and who has learned Christ, as the Lord his righteousness; has seen the glory, fulness, and suitableness of his righteousness, and trusts unto it and depends upon it; and in consequence of this lives soberly, righteously, and godly; teach such a man the doctrines of the Gospel, and every lesson of obedience and duty,

and he will increase in learning; he will grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ and all divine things; (see ~~<DIG2>~~Matthew 13:12).

Ver. 10. *The fear of the Lord [is] the beginning of wisdom*, etc.] This shows who the wise men are, and in what true wisdom lies; no man is wise till he fears the Lord, and he that does so is a wise man, at least then he begins to be one; this is the principal part of wisdom, (~~<DIG7>~~Proverbs 1:7); and is at the first of it; it is the beginning of grace; it is the first act of wisdom, or grace; or which appears as soon as a man is converted and caused to know wisdom in the hidden part; as repentance, faith, and love, quickly show themselves in one act or another, so does the fear of God; for the former are never without the latter; for fear is an awe and reverence of the divine Being, joined with love to him, trust in him, and a desire to serve

and worship him in a right manner; no sooner is a man converted, but presently there is in him a fear of offending God, from a principle of love to him; for not a slavish but a filial fear is here intended;

and the knowledge of the Holy [is] understanding: either the knowledge of the Holy Ones, as the three divine Persons in the Godhead, who are so called, (^{GEN}Joshua 24:19 ^{PROV}Proverbs 30:3 ^{HOSEA}Hosea 11:9); the knowledge of God the Father, who is holy in his nature and works; not a mere natural knowledge of him by the light of nature; nor a mere notional knowledge of him by revelation; not a legal knowledge of him as a lawgiver, and an offended Judge; but an evangelical knowledge of him in Christ, as his God and Father; and as the God of all grace in him; so as to have faith and hope in him, access unto him, and communion with him; this is right understanding: so the knowledge of Christ, God's Holy One; a knowledge of him in his person, offices, and grace; an inward knowledge of him, a spiritual acquaintance with him, so as to approve of him, believe in him, and appropriate him to one's self; this is to attain to a good degree of understanding: as likewise the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, the author of sanctification; of his person, and operations of grace; as a convincer and comforter; as a Spirit of illumination and faith, of regeneration and sanctification; and as the Spirit of adoption, and the earnest of glory; this is another branch of spiritual understanding. Moreover, such knowledge which holy men have, and which makes them so; and which holy men of God, moved by the Holy Ghost, have communicated in the sacred Scriptures, of which they are the penmen. The knowledge of holy things may also be meant; of the holy mysteries of religion, of the holy doctrines of the Gospel, which are all according to godliness, and teach men to live in a holy manner: the faith once delivered to the saints is a most holy faith, encourages and promotes holiness of heart and life; as the doctrines of God's everlasting love; eternal election; the unconditionality of the covenant of grace; redemption by Christ; conversion by efficacious grace; justification by Christ's righteousness; pardon by his blood; satisfaction by his sacrifice; and perseverance by his power: and now a knowledge of these things, not notional, but experimental, is understanding indeed; as well as a knowledge of holy and gracious experiences.

Ver. 11. *For by me thy days shall be multiplied,* etc.] These are the words of Wisdom, and contain a reason and argument why her call and advice in the preceding verses should be listened unto, since she gives long life to her followers. She is a tree of life unto them, the author and giver of spiritual

and eternal life; by means of her bread and her wine spiritual life is maintained, promoted, and preserved; and length of days, for ever and ever, is the gift of her right hand; see (^{<3190>}Proverbs 3:16,18). The Targum is,

“for by it thy days shall be multiplied;”

which seems to refer it to the fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom, in (^{<3190>}Proverbs 9:10), to which long life is attributed; see (^{<3197>}Proverbs 10:27);

and the years of thy life shall be increased; or, “they shall add years of life to thee”^{f255}; wisdom and understanding, the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of the Holy; if not in this world, yet in the world to come, which will be without end.

Ver. 12. *If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself*, etc.] He is wise that harkens to Wisdom’s advice, that obeys her call, turns in to her house, and becomes her guest; and such an one is wise for himself, it is for his own good, profit, and advantage; for the good of his soul, for his present peace and comfort, and for his future bliss and happiness. It is not for her own sake that Wisdom presses her exhortations, and is so urgent on men to take her counsel and advice; it is for their own good; their wisdom is not profitable to her, but to themselves; they, and they only, reap the advantage and usefulness of it; (see ^{<3212>}Job 22:2,3). The Syriac and Arabic versions add, “and unto thy friends”; and the Septuagint version is, “if thou becomest wise to thyself, thou wilt be wise to neighbours”; they will receive some profit by it;

but [if] thou scornest, thou alone shall bear [it]; the evil, as the Vulgate Latin; the sin of scorning, and the punishment due unto it; it will bring no real hurt to Wisdom, or Christ, nor to his ministers, nor to his Gospel and ordinances, scoffed at; all the hurt will redound to the scoffer himself; and he alone shall bear it, and feel the smart of it, and all the dreadful consequences following upon it. The Septuagint version here adds the following clause,

“he that trusteth in lies, he feedeth on winds; the same pursues birds flying; for he forsakes the ways of his own vineyard; he wanders from the paths of his own husbandry; he passes through a desert without water, and a land destined to thirst, and he gathers unfruitfulness with his hands;”

and which are retained in the Syriac and Arabic version, but are not in the Hebrew text.

Ver. 13. *A foolish woman [is] clamorous*, etc.] Some by this woman understand folly itself, as opposed to wisdom; others blind reason, ignorant of divine things; others carnal sensual pleasure, which entices and draws men to that which is evil; others heresy and superstition; others the old serpent, the devil; she seems to be the same with the strange woman and harlot before described, (⁴¹²⁶Proverbs 2:16 5:3 7:5), etc. and being set in direct opposition to Wisdom, or Christ, seems to design antichrist, who is described in the book of the Revelation as the great whore; and all the characters here agree with the same. Antichrist is represented as a “woman”, (^{667B}Revelation 17:3,4,6,18); and is “foolish”; for whatever worldly cunning and craft, and wicked subtlety, there may be in the Romish antichrist, yet he is destitute of all spiritual wisdom and knowledge; and is “clamorous” and noisy, has a mouth speaking great swelling words of vanity and blasphemy, boasting of infallibility, works of supererogation, merits, miracles, wealth, and riches; and very pressing and importunate to gain proselytes to his religion; the priests and Jesuits are compared to noisy, clamorous, croaking frogs, (⁶⁶⁶³Revelation 16:13);

[she is] simple, and knoweth nothing; a woman of follies, extremely foolish and simple, and most grossly ignorant; knows nothing that is good, as the Targum; that is, spiritually good; knows not God aright; is without the fear and love of him, and faith in him; nor knows Christ, and the way of righteousness and life by him; nor the Spirit of God, and the operations of his grace upon the heart; nor the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; nor the ways, worship, and ordinances of God. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, “she knows not shame”; but is bold and impudent, having a whore’s forehead, and on it written, “Mystery, Babylon, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth”, (^{667B}Revelation 17:5).

Ver. 14. *For she sitteth at the door of her house*, &c.] Idle and inactive, looking out for her prey; not active and laborious, as Wisdom, building her house, killing her beasts, furnishing her table, and sending out her maidens to call in her guests; but exposing herself in the most public manner, and being at the utmost ease, sitting as a queen; (see ⁶⁶⁸⁷Revelation 18:7); and as it follows,

on a seat, or “throne”,^{f256}; the same seat, or throne, power, and authority, which the dragon gave to the beast, or antichrist, placed at Rome, where this woman reigns; (see ^{<612>}Revelation 13:2 17:8);

in the high places of the city; the city of Rome, and its jurisdiction, the high places of which are their temples, or churches; where this foolish woman is noisy and clamorous, proclaims her folly, and endeavours to seduce and raw persons to her superstition and idolatry. “Merome”, the word for “high places”, has some affinity with Rome, and comes from the same root^{f257}.

Ver. 15. *To call passengers who go right on their ways.*] Who have been religiously educated, and trained up in the principles of true Christianity; and who walk outwardly according to the rule of the divine word, and are in a fair way for heaven and eternal happiness. These she has her eye upon as they pass along, and calls unto them, and endeavours to turn them aside out of the way they are going, to make them proselytes to her antichristian religion; which, when she succeeds in, she glories and boasts of; just as harlots are very desirous of seducing and debauching chaste, innocent, and virtuous persons; see (^{<612>}Revelation 2:20). Saying as follows:

Ver. 16. *Whoso [is] simple, let him turn in hither*, etc.] The harlot’s house, Popish chapels and churches. She uses the same form of words that Wisdom does, (^{<100>}Proverbs 9:4); having a form of godliness, a show of religion, but without the power of it; her priests are wolves in sheep’s clothing, and speak lies in hypocrisy: and such that she fixes upon as proper persons to work on are the simple, the credulous and unwary; who are not on their guard, and are easily persuaded and imposed on;

and [as for] him that wanteth understanding; is not well grounded in the principles of Christianity he professes; has not a spiritual and experimental understanding of them:

she saith to him; addresses him in such language as follows:

Ver. 17. *Stolen waters are sweet*, etc.] Wells and fountains of waters in those hot countries were very valuable, and were the property of particular persons; about which there were sometimes great strife and contention; and they were sometimes sealed and kept from the use of others; (see ^{<123>}Genesis 26:18-22 ^{<2012>}Song of Solomon 4:12); now waters got by stealth from such wells and fountains were sweeter than their own, or what might be had in common and without difficulty, to which the proverb

alludes. By which in general is meant, that all prohibited unlawful lusts and pleasures are desirable to men, and sweet in the enjoyment of them; and the pleasure promised by them is what makes them so desirable, and the more so because forbidden: and particularly as adultery, which is a sort of theft^{f258}, and a drinking water out of another's cistern, (²⁰¹⁵Proverbs 5:15); being forbidden and unlawful, and secretly committed, is sweeter to an unclean person than a lawful enjoyment of his own wife; so false worship, superstition, and idolatry, the inventions of men, and obedience to their commands, which are no other than spiritual adultery, are more grateful and pleasing to a corrupt mind than the true and pure worship of God;

and bread [eaten] in secret is pleasant; or, “bread of secret places”^{f259}; hidden bread, as the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; that which is stolen and is another's^{f260}, and is taken and hid in secret places, fetched out from thence, or eaten there: the sweet morsel of sin, rolled in the mouth, and kept under the tongue; secret lusts, private sins, particularly idolatry, to which men are secretly enticed, and which they privately commit, (⁴⁵³⁶Deuteronomy 13:6); the same thing is designed by this clause as the forager.

Ver. 18. *But he knoweth not that the dead [are] there*, etc.] In the house of this foolish and wicked woman, into which she invites passengers to turn; the simple, that is persuaded by her, does not consider that there are none there to be his companions, but such who are dead in a moral or spiritual sense; that, though they live in pleasure, they are dead while they live. Aben Ezra refers this to “hell” in the next clause; where her guests are, and where those that are slain by her have their everlasting abode; and where the giants are, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; or the mighty ones she has cast down there, as the Targum; so the word “rephaim” sometimes signifies: and some think that reference is had to the giants of the old world, that corrupted their way on earth, and brought a deluge on it; (see ³⁰²⁶Proverbs 7:26);

[and that] her guests [are] in the depths of hell; not only in the way to it, and on the brink of it, but in the very midst of it: there are many in hell she has invited into her house, and persuaded to turn in there, and commit fornication with her; and all that worship the beast, or commit spiritual adultery with the whore of Rome, will go down to perdition with her, and have their portion in hell fire, in the lake which burns with fire and

brimstone; which they do not consider that are drawn into her idolatrous practices, (~~6649~~ Revelation 14:9-11).

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 10

From this chapter to the “twenty fifth” are various proverbial sentences, without any very apparent connection or coherence with each other; describing righteous and wicked men; setting forth their different temper, conduct, and actions, and the fruits and effects of them. It should be observed, that frequently in the preceding chapters two persons are represented as women; one goes by the name of “Wisdom”, the other is called the “foolish” woman and a “harlot”; the former is clearly to be understood of Christ; and the latter, being opposed to him, must be antichrist, the whore of Rome, and mother of harlots: now in the following part of this book two sorts of persons are spoken of; the one as wise, righteous, good, etc. and the other as foolish, wicked, etc. who are no other than the followers of Christ and antichrist; which observation is a key to the whole book.

Ver. 1. *The proverbs of Solomon*, etc.] This title is repeated from (~~2000~~ Proverbs 1:1); and very properly stands here; since here begin those pithy sentences of Solomon, which bear the name of proverbs; the preceding chapters being a sort of preface or introduction to them; in which Solomon recommends the study of wisdom, shows the profit and advantage of it, gives directions about it, and prepares for the reception of those wise sayings that follow; which are for the most part independent of each other, and consist generally of clauses set in a contrast to one another, and often expressed by similes and metaphors;

a wise son maketh a glad father; as Solomon made glad his father David: for no doubt there were appearances of his wisdom before he came to the throne, though greater afterwards; which made David rejoice that he was placed on the throne before his death, to whom he had committed the charge of building the house of the Lord;

but a foolish son [is] the heaviness of his mother; brings grief and trouble to her, as perhaps Rehoboam did to his mother: though all this is to be understood conjunctly of both parents, and not separately of each; not as if

a wise son only was matter of joy to his father, who may be thought to be a better judge of his wisdom, and more abroad to hear the fame of it, and to observe the effects of it; or as if a foolish son only caused grief to his mother, because more at home, and more privy to his foolish behaviour; but as being equally joyous or afflicting to both parents. Nor is this to be understood of such who are wise and foolish as to their natural capacities only; but who are so in a moral sense, either virtuous or vicious, good or wicked. Wherefore parents should be concerned for the education of their children, whose behaviour much depends upon it; and children for their conduct towards their parents and in the world, since their joy and grief are influenced by it. Some interpret the words mystically, the “father”, of God; the “mother”, of the church; and, the “sons”, of the children of them both: and so may fitly describe the different followers of Christ and antichrist; the one being wise, the other foolish; the one acceptable to God, the other not.

Ver. 2. *Treasures of wickedness profit nothing*, etc.] By which are meant either a large abundance of riches in general, which for the most part are enjoyed by wicked men, and abused to wicked purposes, (^{<3104>}Proverbs 11:4); or an affluence of them, obtained in a wicked way, by fraud, oppression, and the like; (see ^{<3160>}Micah 6:10); Or are either not used at all, or put to wicked uses: what are not used profit not the possessors of them, for they are “kept to the hurt of the owners” of them; and those which are got by ill means, or put to an ill use, “perish by evil travel”, (^{<2153>}Ecclesiastes 5:13,14). Nor can any by his riches either redeem himself or his brother from destruction, or give to God a ransom for him; nor can he by them save himself from a corporeal death one year, one month, one day, one hour, one moment; nor will they be of any service to him in the day of judgment, when wrath comes forth against him;

but righteousness delivereth from death; either that which is righteously got, though it be ever so little, is a means of preserving life, and keeps their souls from famishing, (^{<2103>}Proverbs 10:3); or else what is liberally dispensed, for alms are called “righteousness”, (^{<1333>}Psalms 112:9) (^{<2107>}Daniel 4:27 ^{<1101>}Matthew 6:1 ^{<4710>}2 Corinthians 9:10). These are oftentimes the means of saving the lives of persons ready to perish, on whom they are bestowed, and who will venture their lives to save their benefactors; and such liberal persons are oftentimes blessed with long life, and are kept alive when threatened with death, (^{<1401>}Psalms 41:1-3); and though their good deeds are not meritorious of eternal life, yet they are rewarded with it in a way of grace, (^{<4254>}Matthew 25:34-38). Moreover,

righteousness may be considered as legal and evangelical; a legal righteousness, or the righteousness of men in obedience to the law, cannot deliver from the sentence of death the law has passed; it is not properly a righteousness; it is imperfect, cannot justify, save, or bring to heaven, or entitle to life; notwithstanding this a man must die: but there is an evangelical righteousness; and this is either imparted and implanted in men, is the new man, which is created in righteousness and holiness; and this delivers from a moral or spiritual death, a death in trespasses and sins men are in; for by it they are quickened, live a life of faith on Christ, and have communion with God; have his image stamped on them, and live to him, and to Christ, and to righteousness, being freed from the servitude and dominion of sin; living in which is no other than death: or this righteousness is imputed, which is the righteousness of Christ; wrought out for them, reckoned to them, received by them, and by which they are justified; this delivers them, though not from a corporeal death, yet from the sting and curse of it, and from it as a penal evil, or as a punishment for sin: and it delivers from a legal death, or from the sentence and condemnation of the law, and from the second and eternal death, and entities them to life everlasting.

Ver. 3. *The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish, etc.]* Or to perish by famine: not but that good men may be afflicted with it, as Jacob and his sons were, when the famine was in Egypt and in other lands; and as the apostles, particularly the Apostle Paul, were often in hunger and thirst, yet not so as to be destroyed by it; for in “famine” the Lord redeems such from death; though the young lions lack and suffer hunger, they that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing; at least whatever they may suffer this way does not arise from the wrath of God, nor does it nor can it separate from the love of God and Christ, (~~881~~Job 5:20 ~~8918~~Psalms 34:8,9 ~~8835~~Romans 8:35). Moreover, the souls of such shall not be famished for want of spiritual food; shall not have a famine of the word and ordinances; their souls shall be fed, as with marrow and fatness, with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock: the church, though in the wilderness, is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, (~~8124~~Revelation 12:14);

but he casteth away the substance of the wicked; that which is got in a wicked way; as sometimes he causes it to diminish by little and little; at other times he forcibly and suddenly drives it away, and causes it to take wings and fly away; though it has been swallowed down with great

greediness and in great abundance, he makes them throw it up again, and casts it out of their belly, whether they will or not, so that it does not profit them, (^{<8015>}Job 20:15).

Ver. 4. *He becometh poor that dealeth [with] a slack hand*, etc.] That is either remiss in giving to the necessities of others, according to his abilities, and as cases require; or that is negligent and slothful in his business. Or, “that worketh with a deceitful hand”; or, “with a hand of deceit”^{f261}, as it may be rendered; who pretends to work, but does not; makes a show as if he did, but acts deceitfully; or who uses many tricking and deceitful ways and methods to live, as usually slothful persons do. Aben Ezra observes, it may be rendered and interpreted, “he becomes poor that makes a deceitful balance”; thinking to enrich himself by such fraudulent practices: or, as others, “a deceitful balance maketh poor”^{f262}; such seldom or ever thrive, or it does not long prosper with them who use such unlawful methods;

but the hand of the diligent maketh rich; that is, with the blessing of God along with it, as in (^{<1002>}Proverbs 10:22); such who are “sharp”^{f263} and acute, as the word signifies; who are careful and industrious, mind their business, and do the honest part; these, with a divine blessing, frequently grow rich: or rather who are like those that dig in the earth for gold, who search for it with great eagerness and diligence; for from this root is a word often used for gold, (^{<1014>}Proverbs 3:14 8:19 16:16). All this is true in a spiritual sense; such who are slothful in attendance on the means of grace, the word and ordinances, are slack and negligent in duty, bring a spiritual poverty upon them; and like the Laodicean church, who, through her lukewarmness and carnal security, became poor and wretched, blind and naked: on the other hand, such who are diligent in the use of means are frequent at the throne of grace, forsake not the assembly of the saints, constantly wait at Wisdom’s gates; these grow rich in grace and in all good works.

Ver. 5. *He that gathereth in summer [is] a wise son*, etc.] Which is the time of gathering the fruits of the earth, and laying them up against winter, as the ant is said to do, (^{<1018>}Proverbs 6:8);

[but] he that sleepeth in harvest [is] a son that causeth shame; to himself, and to his parents and relations. The sum of the proverb is, that, in the time of health and youth, persons should be active and industrious in their several callings and stations, and provide against a time of sickness and old

age; and that they should lose no opportunities, neither in a natural nor spiritual way, of doing or receiving good.

Ver. 6. *Blessings [are] upon the head of the just*, etc.] That seeks for righteousness, not by the works of the law, but by faith; that lives by faith upon the righteousness of Christ, and is justified by it, made, accounted, and reckoned just through it; and, in consequence of his faith, does justly, and lives soberly, righteously, and godly: upon his “head”, who is Christ, blessings are; for he is “the head of every [such] man”, (~~410B~~ 1 Corinthians 11:3); not the pope of Rome, but Christ, is head of the church; he is the representative and federal head of all the elect, both in eternity and time; he is a political head to them, as a king is to his subjects; an economical one, as the husband is the head of the wife, a father the head of his family, and a master the head of his servants; and he is in such sense a head to them as a natural head is to its body; he is of the same nature with them, superior to them, a perfect, only, everliving, and everlasting head. Upon him all the blessings of grace and goodness are; his people are blessed with them in him, their head, (~~400B~~ Ephesians 1:3); and from him they descend to them, the members of his body, just as the oil on Aaron’s head ran down his beard to the skirts of his garments. So in an ancient writing of the Jews^{f264}, this passage being mentioned, it is asked, Who is the head of the righteous? The answer is, the middle pillar; by whom they seem to mean a middle person, the Mediator, the Messiah. Or else, a part being put for the whole, the meaning is, that blessings are upon the persons of righteous ones, as the word is used in (~~400B~~ Proverbs 11:26 25:22); the Targum renders it, “the heads of the righteous.”

All covenant blessings, spiritual ones, such as are blessings indeed, solid and substantial, irreversible, and for ever; particularly a justifying righteousness, from whence they are denominated just; pardon of sin, peace of soul, every sanctifying grace, the blessing of adoption, and a right to eternal life: these being said to be on the “head” of them, may denote that they come from above, and descend in a way of grace upon them; that they are visible and manifest; that they reside, continue, and remain upon them; that they are as an ornament and crown unto them; and that they are a security of them that no wrath and vengeance can fall upon them. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read, “the blessing of the Lord [is] upon the head of the just”; and such are all the blessings before mentioned;

but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked; that is, either his violent dealings are open and manifest, and are a scandal to him, as well as entail a curse on him; or rather the fruit and effect of his violence and oppression, the punishment due thereunto, is so righteously inflicted on him, that his mouth is stopped, and he has not one word to say against the just judgments of God upon him, for his violent usage of men, whether here or hereafter; (see ^{<19472>}Psalm 107:42). Some render the words, “the mouth of the wicked covereth violence”^{f265}; palliates and excuses it, and calls it by another name; or hides and conceals that which is in the heart, and does not utter it; see (^{<20018>}Proverbs 10:18). The Targum is,

“in the mouth of the wicked rapine is covered;”

as a sweet morsel under their tongue, though in the end bitterness.

Ver. 7. *The memory of the just [is] blessed*, etc.] Men to whom he has been useful, either in temporals or spirituals, bless him, or wish all blessings to him while alive, whenever they make mention of his name; and after death they speak well of him, and pronounce him blessed; for such are had in everlasting remembrance; the memory of them is sweet and precious; their name is famous and valuable, and always spoken of with honour and commendation; (see ^{<19816>}Psalm 112:6). The Jewish writers take it for a command, and render it, “let the memory of the just be blessed”; and say, that he that transgresses it breaks an affirmative precept; they make an abbreviation of the word by the initial letters, and join them to the names of their celebrated men;

but the name of the wicked shall rot; shall be forgotten, be buried in oblivion, and never mentioned: and though they may call their houses, lands, and cities, by their own names, in order to transmit their memory to posterity; yet these, by one means or another, are destroyed, and their memorials perish with them; (see ^{<20810>}Ecclesiastes 8:10 ^{<19411>}Psalm 49:11 9:6); and if their names are mentioned after they are gone, it is with detestation and abhorrence, as things putrefied are abhorred; so they leave an ill savour behind them, when the good name of the righteous is as precious ointment, (^{<20016>}Ecclesiastes 7:1). It is a saying of Cicero^{f266}, that

“the life of the dead lies in the memory of the living.”

Ver. 8. *The wise in heart will receive commandments*, etc.] Such who have true wisdom in the hidden part of the heart, of which the fear of the Lord is the beginning: these will not only, as good subjects, honour their king, and

attend to his lawful commands; and, as dutiful children, regard those of their parents; and, as faithful servants, hearken to those of their masters; but, as such that fear the Lord, will receive and cheerfully obey the commandments of God and Christ;

but a prating fool shall fall; like Diotrefes, that prated against the Apostle John and other saints. Or, “a fool of lips”^{f267}; whose folly is proclaimed and made known by his lips; who, out of the abundance of it in his heart, speaks and pours it out by his lips: such an one falls into sin and into mischief; he falls into disgrace in this world, and into hell in the next. The Targum is,

“the fool by his lips shall be taken;”

as in a snare.

Ver. 9. *He that walketh uprightly walketh surely*, etc.] Or, “that walketh in perfection”^{f268} as the Targum. Not that walks without sin, no man does that; but that walks in the sincerity, integrity, and uprightness of his heart, both before God and men; who worships God in spirit and in truth, and speaks the truth in his heart to his neighbour; who is an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile; who walks uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel; who makes the word of God the rule of his life and actions; who walks by faith on Christ, using him as the way to the Father; believing in him for salvation; walking on in him as he has received him, and especially dealing with his uprightness or righteousness for his justification before God; who walks, as Christ did, in imitation of him; who walks in love, as he did, and in all humility, meekness, patience, and self-denial; who walks in and after the Spirit of Christ; and in the truths of the Gospel, and in all the ordinances thereof; and in all holy conversation and godliness, studying to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men. Such a man “walks surely”, or securely, safely, confidently, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, interpret the word. Such an one has nothing to fear in his walk; he walks on “terra firma”, on good ground, in a good way, which leads to life eternal: he has a good guide, the Spirit of God, which goes before him, and will be his guide even unto death, and lead him in the way everlasting, unto the land of uprightness; he has a good guard about him, not only the angels of God that encamp around him, but God himself is a wall of fire to him, and his power surrounds and protects him; he has many precious promises to support him; not only that the Lord will be a buckler to him, but will withhold no

good thing from him, (^{<3017>}Proverbs 2:7 ^{<3841>}Psalm 84:11); he has the gracious and supporting presence of God, when he passes through the fire and water of afflictions, and even through the valley of the shadow of death, so that he has nothing to fear; and has moreover the testimony of a good conscience; and having a good hope through grace, he “walks in hope”, as the Targum is; yea, rejoices in hope of the glory of God, and holds fast that rejoicing to the end;

but he that perverteth his ways shall be known; who does not walk in a plain, direct, and even path, according to the rule of the word, as the upright man; but winds about here and there, goes into crooked paths, walks in craftiness as deceitful workers, whose folly shall be made manifest; though they think to hide it, and deceive men, they and their wickedness shall be exposed, their tricks and artful methods shall be laid open, and they be known to be what they are; if not in this life, yet at the last judgment, (^{<5424>}1 Timothy 5:24 ^{<5092>}2 Timothy 3:9). Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe another sense of the word, “he shall be broken”, and compare with it (^{<0716>}Judges 8:16 ^{<2513>}Isaiah 53:3).

Ver. 10. *He that winketh with the eye*, etc.] The Syriac and Arabic versions add, “with fraud”. A descriptive character of a wicked man, (^{<3013>}Proverbs 6:13); who so does, either to draw and allure persons to go along with him, and join him in his evil practices; or by way of scorn and contempt of others; or as a token to another of its being the proper time to circumvent his neighbour, or do him an injury. Such an one

causeth sorrow; to himself in the issue, however he may for the present please himself with his evil doings; and to others, whom he allures and deceives. The Arabic version is, “heaps afflictions” or “sorrows on men”; whom he corrupts and draws into his evil company and conversation;

but a prating fool shall fall; or, “be taken”, as the Targum; or “beaten”, as the Vulgate Latin; (see Gill on “^{<3008>}Proverbs 10:8”).

Ver. 11. *The mouth of a righteous [man is] a well of life*, etc.] Like a fountain of living water, continually running and flowing with water, wholesome, reviving, and refreshing; so the righteous man’s mouth, out of the abundance of his heart, overflows with good things, which minister grace to the hearers, and are for the use of edifying; things that are pleasant and profitable, grateful and acceptable, comforting, refreshing, and

pleasing, and which tend to the good of the life that now is, and that which is to come;

but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked; so that nothing comes out of it but what is pernicious and hurtful; what savours of rapine and violence; nothing but lying and deceit, cursing and swearing, and such like filthy and corrupt communication; (see Gill on “^{<3006>}Proverbs 10:6”). The Targum is, “the mouth of the ungodly covers injury”; which is meditated in the heart; so the Vulgate Latin version.

Ver. 12. *Hatred stirreth up strifes*, etc.] A man, whose heart is full of hatred and malice against his neighbour, will stir up, or awake, as the word^{f269} signifies, contentions and quarrels which were happily laid asleep; these he renews by tale bearing, and whisperings, and evil surmises; by raising lies, spreading false reports and calumnies, and by virulent reproaches and slanders;

but love covereth all sins; not its own, but others; in imitation of the pardoning love and grace of God, which covers all the sins of his people with the blood and righteousness of his Son. Love spreads its mantle over the sins of its fellow creatures and Christians, and forgives them, even all of them: instead of exposing them, hides and conceals them; and, instead of loading and aggravating the infirmities of others, puts the best constructions on them, hopes and bears, and believes all things, (^{<4337>}1 Corinthians 13:7); (see ^{<4048>}1 Peter 4:8); where the apostle seems to have respect to this passage. This is not to be understood as conniving at or suffering sin upon others, or as contrary to Christian reproofs and rebukes for it.

Ver. 13. *In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found*, etc.] He that has an understanding, especially of divine, spiritual, and evangelic things, which is the pure gift of God; wisdom will be found in his lips, his mouth will speak of it; not of mere natural wisdom, but spiritual wisdom; of the wisdom of God in his works; of Christ, the Wisdom of God; of the Gospel, the hidden wisdom; of inward experience of the grace of God, wisdom in the inward part, (^{<4873>}Psalm 37:30); from his lips will drop wise sayings, very instructive and informing; which those that seek for and observe may find to their profit and advantage, and to the great credit and honour of the understanding man; while the foolish man gets both stripes and disgrace, as follows;

but a rod [is] for the back of him that is void of understanding; or, “wants a heart”^{f270}: that has no understanding of spiritual things in his heart, and so utters nothing but what is foolish and wicked, and, sooner or later, is chastised for it. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read this clause in connection with the former, thus; “he that brings forth wisdom out of his lips smites with a rod him that is void of understanding”.

Ver. 14. *Wise [men] lay up knowledge*, etc.] Which they get by reading, prayer, meditation, hearing the word of God, and conversation with good men: this they lay up in their hearts, minds, and memories, that they may not forget it, and as a rich treasure they highly value it; that they may bring it forth at proper times, and on proper occasions, for the benefit of others; (see ⁴¹²⁵Matthew 12:35 13:52); or hide^{f271} it; conceal it; do not boast and brag of it, as foolish men do;

but the mouth of the foolish [is] near destruction: who rashly and unguardedly utters things which bring swift and sudden destruction on himself and others; or terror and consternation, as the word^{f272} also signifies. The Vulgate Latin version is, “but the mouth of the foolish is near to confusion”; he boasts of his knowledge, betrays his ignorance, and so brings himself to shame and confusion.

Ver. 15. *The rich man’s wealth [is] his strong city*, etc.] What a fortified city is to persons in time of war, that is a rich man’s wealth to him; by it he can defend himself from the injuries of others, and support himself and family in times of public calamity; for money is a defence, and answers all things, (²¹⁰⁷²Ecclesiastes 7:12 10:19). Or his wealth is so in his own apprehension and conceit; he puts his trust and confidence in it, and thinks himself safe and secure by it; when he is trusting to uncertain riches, which will fail him; these may fly away from him in life, and leave him exposed to distress and danger; and, however, will not secure him at death from the wrath of God and everlasting destruction. Or he is lifted up with his riches, is in high spirits, and despises others; thinking himself safe, as in a strong castle, and fears nothing, distresses, diseases, or death;

the destruction of the poor [is] their poverty: or their poverty is their consternation, as the word^{f273} signifies, it frightens them; they, knowing their circumstances, are afraid of everybody and of every thing; not being able to defend themselves against their enemies, or support themselves in times of public calamity, as war, famine, or pestilence.

Ver. 16. *The labour of the righteous [tendeth] to life*, etc.] To natural life, and the support of it; all that he labours for is to get a livelihood for himself and family; that is all he desires, nor does he seek great things for himself: or to spiritual life; so his spiritual exercises in praying, reading, and hearing the word, and waiting upon ordinances, have a tendency to promote and maintain a spiritual life in him: or to eternal life; not that the works of a righteous man (so the Targum, Septuagint, and Arabic versions, render it in the plural number) are meritorious of eternal life; for life and righteousness are not to be had by the works of men, but by the grace of God; yet, as the righteous man labours for the meat which endures to everlasting life, given by the Son of God, his labour may be said to tend to life eternal, (~~4167~~John 6:27);

the fruit of the wicked to sin; whatever he enjoys, whether got by labour; though the word seems purposely omitted, as some observe, to signify that is not intended; or whether left him as an inheritance; or whatever way acquired, lawfully or unlawfully; all his revenues and riches, the increase of his substance and fields, are all used to sinful purposes, to pride, luxury, and wantonness; and so tend to death, even death eternal, the just wages of sin.

Ver. 17. *He [is in] the way of life*, etc.] Of eternal life, which is truly, properly, and by way of eminency, “life”, (~~4167~~Matthew 19:17); and which is a life of glory; a life of perfection, of perfect holiness, knowledge, obedience, love, peace, and joy; a life free from all the inconveniences of the present life, animal or spiritual; a life of pleasure, and which will last for ever: the “way” to it is not by works of righteousness done by men, since by these the law is not fulfilled, nor justice satisfied; and therefore no justification of life by them, or what entitles to eternal life; it is sinful, dangerous, and a vain thing, to seek for eternal life in this way; Christ is the only true way to it; who, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, has opened the new and living way; and through his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, way is made for all that believe in him to enter into eternal life: and such are in the way to it who are in Christ, secretly in election, openly in the effectual calling; when they are made new creatures, are quickened by the Spirit and grace of Christ, and have that principle in them which is a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life; who have a sight of Christ, and come unto him by faith; who truly believe in him, with which eternal life is connected. Particularly he is in the way unto it

that keepeth instruction; the instruction in righteousness which the Scriptures give, especially the Gospel part of them; which is an instruction into the mind and will of God about man's salvation; into the grace of God, as displayed therein; into the person and offices of Christ, and salvation by him; into the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, and life, through him. Now he to whom this instruction comes with power, and is the savour of life unto life; who receives it in the love of it; who "observes"^{f274} it, as the word here used signifies; takes notice of and follows its direction, pointing out Christ as the way of salvation, instructing to look to him and believe in him, and be saved; and who retains and holds fast such instruction, and abides by it; and finds the word of the Gospel, and eats it, and is nourished by it unto everlasting life; he is most assuredly in the way of it;

but he that refuseth reproof erreth; that is, from the way of life. He that rejects the counsel and advice, the admonitions and reproofs, given in the word of God, by the ministers of it; or by parents and masters, friends or relations, that wish him well; he wanders far off from the way that leads to life, and goes into the paths of sin, and consequently is in the way of death. Some render it, "causeth to err"^{f275}; either others, as Aben Ezra; or both himself and others, as Jarchi: and then it may be understood of him "that forsaketh reproof"^{f276}, as it may be rendered; that is, that declines giving reproof, when it lies in his way, and is his duty to do it. Aben Ezra reads this clause in connection with the former, as said of one and the same person,

"he is in the way of life that keepeth instruction, and forsakes or rejects the reproof of him that causeth to err."

Ver. 18. *He that hideth hatred [with] lying lips*, etc.] Or he whose "lying lips hide hatred", which is much the same; who pretends to be a friend, and outwardly behaves as one, but inwardly nourishes and cherishes hatred in his heart, which he covers and conceals, till he has a proper opportunity of showing it; as Absalom to Ammon, Joab to Amasa, the men of Anathoth to Jeremiah, and Judas to Christ; see (^{26:24-26} Proverbs 26:24-26). Or, "he that hideth hatred [is a man of] lying lips"^{f277}; he is a liar, as the person next described is a fool. And he that uttereth slander is a fool; that brings it out by wholesale, and hides it not; who openly defames his neighbour, and in the most public manner; and with a multitude of words detracts from his good name, credit, and reputation, and loads him with calumny and

reproach; such a man is a fool, a very wicked man: yea, not only the public slanderer, but the secret dissembler, who thinks himself a cunning man because he hides himself; each of these is a fool, the one as well as the other. Gersom thinks there is a comparison made between the dissembler and the slanderer; the one being a liar, and the other a fool; and that the former is more abominable and pernicious than the latter.

Ver. 19. *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin*, etc.] Where a great deal is said, without care and forethought, there will not only be many weak things uttered, but much falsehood, and at least many idle things, which cannot be excused from sin; not but that much and long speaking may be to great profit and advantage, when it is with care and judgment, and founded on close meditation and study. Or, “sin ceaseth not”^{f278}; along with a torrent of words is a flow of sin, which ceases not as long as that continues: it is a saying of the Jewish Rabbins,

“he that multiplies words brings on or brings unto sin;”

but he that refraineth his lips [is] wise; lays a restraint on his mouth, bridles his tongue; does not suffer his lips to utter anything rashly and inconsiderately; is sparing of his words and is careful of what he says, that it is true and proper to be spoken; and considers well the time when, place where, and persons to whom he speaks; and, all circumstances weighed, conducts accordingly: such a man is a wise, prudent, and understanding man; (see ^{<1072>}Proverbs 17:27,28).

Ver. 20. *The tongue of the just [is as] choice silver*, etc.] Which utters things precious, pure, pleasant, and profitable; things for worth and value as choice silver; the doctrines of the Gospel, the power of which he has felt upon his heart; the precious promises of it, which have been applied unto him; and the rich experience of grace he has been favoured with: things pure and incorrupt, like silver free from dross; as the doctrines of grace, fetched out of the mines of the sacred Scripture, free from the dross of error, without any human mixture; consistent and all of a piece, and which tend to purity of heart and life; things the reverse of a corrupt communication, nothing filthy and unclean; a pure language, the language of Canaan; the language of repentance, faith, and love, of prayer and thankfulness: things which are grateful and acceptable, are with grace, and minister grace to the hearers; things profitable and edifying; for the righteous man’s mouth speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment; and his lips feed many, as in (^{<1002>}Proverbs 10:21); (see ^{<1873>}Psalms 37:30);

the heart of the wicked [is] little worth; good for nothing, as the Vulgate Latin version. The righteous man's tongue is better than the wicked man's heart; there is no good thing in his heart naturally; all manner of evil is in it, and comes out of it; no sin can be named but what is in his heart; all that is in it is sinful; the thoughts of it, and the imagination of his thoughts, are only evil, and that continually; the affections are inordinate, and set on sinful lusts and pleasures; the mind and conscience are defiled with sin; the understanding is darkened with it, and the will is obstinate and perverse, and bent upon it: his heart is wicked, and exceedingly wicked; it is wickedness itself, very wickedness, desperately wicked, incurably so without the grace of God. Such therefore know not their hearts who say they have good hearts; and they are fools that trust in them: this shows the necessity of regeneration, and that powerful and efficacious grace is requisite to it.

Ver. 21. *The lips of the righteous feed many*, etc.] Not their bodies; words are but wind, and will not feed; it is not enough to say to the distressed, "be ye warmed and filled", and give nothing; unless this can be understood of obtaining food for others by their prayers, as Jarchi interprets it: but the souls of many; these the righteous feed, by communicating the spiritual knowledge and understanding of divine things they are partakers of; by setting before them the bread of life, the honey and milk of the Gospel, they have under their tongue; and by the good counsel and advice, comforts and admonitions, they give them; (see ²⁰¹⁵Jeremiah 3:15 ²⁰¹¹Song of Solomon 4:11);

but fools die for want of wisdom: not a corporeal death, which is common to men of every rank and quality; wise men die even as fools; but they continue under the power of a spiritual death, for want of enlightening and quickening grace, and so die an eternal death: not for want of natural wisdom, which they may have a greater share of than those who live spiritually and eternally; but for want of spiritual wisdom and knowledge; the knowledge of Christ, and the way of life and salvation by him, and the knowledge of God in Christ; and not always for the want of the means of such wisdom and knowledge; as the Scriptures, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation; and the Gospel, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery; but through the neglect and contempt of them: though sometimes men perish through want of the means of knowledge, and the neglect of those who should instruct them, (²⁰¹⁶Hosea 4:6).

Ver. 22. *The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich*, etc.] In the diligent use of means; (see ^{<100>}Proverbs 10:4); riches are from the Lord, and should be acknowledged as such, and not attributed to the industry, diligence, sagacity, and merit of men; but should be looked upon as had through the blessing of the Lord upon the labours of men; and when they come this way they come as a blessing, and with one: it may be understood of being made rich in a spiritual sense; it is the blessing, good will, and favour of God, that makes men rich in Christ; that bestows upon them his unsearchable riches; that enriches them with all spiritual blessings in him; that makes them rich in faith and in good works, and with the riches of grace and of glory;

and he addeth no sorrow with it; no sorrow goes along with the blessing, but what is a blessing itself, as one observes; riches enjoyed through the blessing of God are not attended with that sorrow in getting, keeping, and losing them, as the riches of wicked men unlawfully gotten are; (see ^{<100>}1 Timothy 6:9,10); for as the good man comes by them easily, without any anxious care and sinful solicitude, he seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things are added to him, over and above, without much thought about them, or expectation of them, (^{<100>}Matthew 6:33); so it is with great delight, pleasure, and cheerfulness, he enjoys them, and readily communicates them to others; while the wicked man is full of anxiety, distress, and sorrow; see (^{<100>}Ecclesiastes 5:12,13,18 6:2). This is eminently true of spiritual riches; there is no sorrow attending them; the fruit and effect of them are peace, joy, and comfort.

Ver. 23. *[It is] as sport to a fool to do mischief*, etc.] To do any injury to the persons and properties of men; which shows a most wicked and malicious spirit, a very depraved nature indeed: or rather “to commit sin”^{f279} of any sort, which he has devised in his own heart; it is as a “laughing”^{f280}, as the words may be rendered; it is a laughing matter to him, he commits sin, and, when he has done it, laughs at it; instead of being ashamed of it, and humbled for it, he makes a mock at it, and a jest of it, as well as of all religion, and of the reproofs and admonitions of good men. Sin is pastime, he takes as much delight and pleasure in it as men do in their sports, and commits it as openly and freely; yea, not only takes pleasure in doing it himself, but in them that do it; (see ^{<100>}Proverbs 14:9 ^{<100>}Romans 1:30);

but a man of understanding hath wisdom; to avoid sin, and not to do it, which is true wisdom, (^{<4338>}Job 28:28); for he has, as it may be rendered, from the use of the word in the Arabic language^{f281}, a “bridle” or “restraint” upon him, that he cannot do mischief and delight in it, as the fool does: or “so [is] wisdom to a man of understanding”^{f282}; that is, to do it; as it is a pleasure to a feel to commit sin, so it is a delight to an understanding man to do that which is wise and good; it is “meat and drink” to do the will of God, (see ^{<4046>}John 4:34); he takes as much pleasure in it as men can do in their sports and pastimes; he has a truer pleasure and a better relish than they have; he delights in the law of God after the inward man; and Wisdom’s ways, or the ways of Christ, are pleasantness to him; he runs the ways of his commandments with great alacrity and cheerfulness.

Ver. 24. *The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him*, etc.] What he dreads in his own mind will be his unhappy case, sooner or later it comes upon him; his fear of distresses, calamities, and judgments in this life, and of eternal wrath and vengeance hereafter; for the most profligate and abandoned wretches, the greatest atheists, who endeavour to work themselves up to a disbelief of a God and a future state, have at times their frights and fears about these things; and as are their fears of God, so will his wrath be, (^{<4901>}Psalms 90:11). Jarchi illustrates this in the instance of the builders of Babel, who were afraid of being scattered upon the face of the earth, which thing feared came upon them through and for their building of the tower; and so it sometimes is, that the very thing which men fear comes upon them by the means which they take to prevent it; so the Jews were afraid that if their people believed in Jesus of Nazareth, the Romans would come and seize their city and nation, and therefore endeavoured to persuade them to reject him; for which rejection of him the thing they feared came upon them;

but the desire of the righteous shall be granted; or “he shall give”^{f283}; that is, God shall give it; who has it in his hands or power to give it, as Jarchi’s note is: what a righteous man desires from right principles, and with right views; what is for his own good and the glory of God; what he asks in faith, and with submission to the divine will, and is according to it, is sooner or later, in God’s own time and way, granted unto him: particularly his desires after righteousness; after the righteousness of Christ, and to be found alone in that, living and dying; after holiness of heart and life, that he might be cleansed and kept from sin, and preserved to the coming of

Christ; after more grace, an increase of it, and fresh supplies from Christ; after more communion with God and Christ, and conformity to them; after glory and happiness, and a being with them to all eternity. Some understand this of the righteous man's desire upon the wicked; that his fear might come upon him, and the glory of divine justice appear in his swift and sudden destruction; as expressed in (^{<30025>}Proverbs 10:25); so Aben Ezra.

Ver. 25. *As the whirlwind passeth, so [is] the wicked no [more]*, etc.] The wicked themselves are like a whirlwind, noisy, boisterous, and blustering; such is the man of sin, who speaks like a dragon, breathing out slaughter and threatening against the saints; and so are his followers, fierce and heady, and like a whirlwind, pernicious and destructive, bearing down, carrying away, and destroying all before it; so the locusts of the bottomless pit, under their king Abaddon, or Apollyon, the destroyer; and all tyrannical persecutors, who are as the boar out of the forest, and the wild beast of the field: and these "pass away" like a whirlwind, swiftly, suddenly, and at once; now they are seen in great power and authority, and anon they are not any more, (^{<30413>}Jeremiah 4:13 ^{<3575>}Psalm 37:35,36); as the whirlwind, which digs up the earth, makes a circle and buries itself in it; so the wicked dig a pit for others and fall into it themselves, (^{<3074>}Psalm 7:14,16 9:15,16); and as a whirlwind passes away to the joy of men, so when the wicked perish there is shouting; as will be at the destruction of antichrist more especially, (^{<3110>}Proverbs 11:10 ^{<3601>}Revelation 19:1); and it is in the whirlwind and storm of divine wrath, which falls upon the head of the wicked, by which they are caused to pass away, (^{<3239>}Jeremiah 23:19 ^{<3271>}Job 27:20-23); so that they are "not": not that they are annihilated at death, they will rise again and come to judgment, and live in torment for ever; when they pass away, they are somewhere; they are "not" indeed in the land of the living, in their own houses, as formerly, which will know them no more; they are not in their grandeur and prosperity, enjoying their riches and honour; but they are in their own place, in hell they lift up their eyes, though they wish they had no being;

but the righteous [is] an everlasting foundation; he is in a firm and stable state here and hereafter; interested in everlasting love; in which he is rooted and grounded; secured in an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; having a share in everlasting salvation, and eternal redemption wrought out by Christ; being justified by his everlasting righteousness, which will answer for him in a time to come; and a partaker of those graces

of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love, which are a well of living water springing up to everlasting life; and having everlasting strength and everlasting consolation in Christ, and a title to eternal life through him. Or, “but the righteous [has] an everlasting foundation”^{f284}; the sense is the same; which foundation is not external privileges of birth and education, or a mere outward profession of religion, or works of righteousness done; these are not everlasting, but sandy foundations; but Christ is the righteous man’s foundation, and he is the only one, (~~4BIB~~ 1 Corinthians 3:11). Some take the sense to be, the “righteous”, that is, Jesus Christ the righteous, “is an everlasting foundation”; he is the foundation of the church, the rock on which it is built; he is the foundation of the apostles and prophets, on which they were laid, and by whom they are saved; he is the foundation of every particular believer, they are rooted and built up on him; he is the foundation of their faith, hope, love, peace, joy, and comfort, and of their eternal glory and happiness: and an “everlasting one” he is; he is so in his person as God-man; in his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; in the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and is a foundation which is sure, and will never fail: he has been the foundation of his people in all ages; and he is the same today, yesterday, and for ever. Hence, though the wicked pass away as the whirlwind, and by one, the righteous shall not; they are on a foundation, and cannot be blown off of it by the storms and tempests of Satan’s temptations, their own corruptions, the persecutions of men, the errors of the wicked, or by the whirlwind of divine wrath and vengeance. Some render it, “the righteous [is] the foundation of the world”^{f285}; the pillar and support of it; as the righteous are the salt of the earth, they are the stay of it: the whirlwind of God’s wrath would tear up the course of nature, dissolve the earth, and all things in it, were it not for the sake of the righteous; and, when they are called and gathered in, there will be a general dissolution of all things, (~~6ORD~~ 2 Peter 3:9,10).

Ver. 26. *As vinegar to the teeth*, etc.] Which, with its coldness and sourness, blunts the teeth, and makes it troublesome to eat: the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it,

“as the sour grape is hurtful to the teeth;”

sets them on edge;

and as smoke to the eye; dims the sight, causes the eye to water, and is very pernicious and vexatious:

so [is] the sluggard to them that send him: that is, the slothful messenger, as the Targum explains it; who, being sent on an errand, is dilatory, does not make haste to bring back the answer; which is very vexatious to those that send him, raises their passions, makes them fretful and very angry, be it on what account it will: so slothful and unprofitable servants, to whom talents are given for usefulness, which they hide or use not, are very provoking to Christ, and whom he will order into outer darkness; those who have gifts for sacred service ought not to be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, (^{<4256>}Matthew 25:26,29 ^{<4516>}Romans 12:6-11).

Ver. 27. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days,* etc.] Not beyond the time fixed in the unalterable purposes and decrees of God, (^{<3846>}Job 14:5); but longer than some others, or than those that fear the Lord expect to live; or longer than, according to the course of nature, and the weakness of their constitutions, it could be thought they should live. Long life is promised to them that fear the Lord; godliness has the promise of this life and of that to come; the fear of the Lord is the means of preserving persons from those things which are pernicious to the health of men, and so of prolonging their days; as well as it has length of days, for ever and ever, even eternal life, annexed to it; (see ^{<4341>}Psalms 34:11-14);

but the years of the wicked shall be shortened; through diseases, which their sins bring upon them, which cut them off before they have lived out half their days; or by means of which, their sins, they come into the hand of the civil magistrate, and die before their time; or are taken off in their full strength by the immediate judgment of God, as were Ananias and Sapphira; and so they die in the midst of their days; and before the time, which, according to the course of nature, and the common period of life, in all human probability they might have arrived unto, (^{<4523>}Psalms 55:23 ^{<2077>}Ecclesiastes 7:17).

Ver. 28. *The hope of the righteous [shall be] gladness,* etc.] Or, “[is] gladness”^{f286}; it is now attended with joy; he has a pleasure in the exercise of the grace of hope as to future things; he rejoices in hope of the glory of God, and is enabled to hold fast the rejoicing of his hope firm unto the end, (^{<4840>}Romans 5:2 ^{<3836>}Hebrews 3:6); and the issue of his hope will be an abundant entrance into the joy of his Lord; a being brought into his presence, in which is fulness of joy; he is not ashamed of his hope now, and he will not be disappointed hereafter;

but the expectation of the wicked shall perish; his hope and expectation, either of riches, and honour, and pleasure in this world, or of a long life in it; or of happiness in the other, and of escaping the wrath of God, and the vengeance of eternal fire; all which, being grounded on a wrong bottom, shall be frustrated; see (~~1883~~-Job 8:13 11:20 27:8).

Ver. 29. *The way of the Lord [is] strength to the upright*, etc.] Who are upright in heart and life; who have the uprightness or righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and right spirits renewed in them; in consequence of which they walk uprightly, (~~3009~~-Proverbs 10:9). To these “the way of the Lord [is] strength”; both the way which he himself takes, and the way which he prescribes and directs his people to walk in: the way in which he walks in providence towards them is the strength of them; he is their shade on their right hand; he shows himself strong on their behalf; he is their fortress and strong tower, as the God of providence, even a wall of fire round about them: and the way he takes in the discoveries of his love; in the communications of his grace; in the application of precious promises; by granting the influences of his Spirit; and by leading to his Son, the than of his right hand, made strong for himself and them, is very strengthening unto them: so likewise the way in which he leads his people, the way of his word and ordinances; which, as it is pleasant, so strengthening; the more they walk in them, the stronger they are; they go from strength to strength, they grow stronger and stronger by them; while they are waiting on the Lord in them, their spiritual strength is renewed: moreover, walking in the way of the Lord gives them spirit and courage, and makes them bold and intrepid; so that they fear no enemy, nor any dangers and difficulties, but go on their way cheerfully and pleasantly;

but destruction [shall be] to the workers of iniquity; not to all that do iniquity, for no man lives without sin; but to those who give up themselves to it, make a trade of it; whose course of life is sinful, and do nothing else but sin; this their way leads to ruin; destruction and misery are now in all their ways, and will be the certain issue of them, even destruction of both soul and body; which will be swift and sudden, come upon them before they are aware, and will be everlasting; it will continue for ever, and there will be no deliverance from it. The Word^{f287} signifies terror and consternation; and such seize on a wicked man at death, to whom death is the king of terrors; and which will still more strongly possess him when in hell he lifts up his eyes; and also at the day of judgment, when he shall see the Judge coming in the clouds of heaven, sitting on a fiery throne, and

shall hear him pronounce him cursed. The clause may be rendered, but the way of the Lord is “terror to the workers of iniquity”^{f288}; the way of the Lord in his works of providence, in which he oftentimes does terrible things in righteousness; and he is very terrible to men in his judgments here, and will be more so in his awful procedure at the last judgment.

Ver. 30. *The righteous shall never be removed*, etc.] They may be removed from place to place in this world, through the persecutions of their enemies, or through one providence or another, as they often are; they may be removed from a state of outward prosperity to a state of adversity, as Job was; they may be removed from spiritual and comfortable frames of soul to carnal or uncomfortable ones; for good frames are very precarious and uncertain things; and they will be removed out of this world into another; here they have no continuing city: but they shall never be removed from the love of God, nothing can separate them from that; they are set as a seal on his heart, and are engraven on the palms of his hands, and there is no removing them from thence; they may be waiver about their interest in the love of God; they may be without the manifestations and discoveries of it to their souls; they may be under the hidings of God’s face; they may be at a distance from his house and ordinances, or may not enjoy the presence of God in them for a time; yet not separated from his affections; they shall never be removed out of the hands of Christ, into which they are put for security, and out of which none can pluck them, men or devils; how should they, since they are in those hands that made the heavens and the earth, support all in being, and hold the reins of government? Was it possible they could be removed from hence, it would impeach the wisdom of God, who has put them there; argue weakness in Christ, and suppose danger to them. Nor can they be removed out of the family of God; sons of God abide in his house for ever; they are no more foreigners and strangers; once children, no more servants; they may be corrected and chastised, yet be children; they may judge themselves unworthy of the relation, and be ready to conclude that their spots are not the spots of God’s children, and fear they are none of them, and yet the relation continues: nor will they ever be removed from their state of justification, by which they are denominated righteous, into a state of condemnation; for full satisfaction is given to law and justice for them; their justification is complete, it is from all sin; the righteousness by which they are justified is everlasting, and even their faith which receives it shall never fail; to which may be added, that they are secured from wrath to

come, and entitled to eternal life. In a word, they are on the sure foundation of electing grace; they are in the immovable covenant of grace; they are on the Rock of ages, Christ Jesus; all the divine Persons and perfections are on their side; they are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation; see (^{<4852>}Psalm 55:22 125:1,2);

but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth; but a very little while, as Gersom observes; and the time of their abode on earth is so short, as scarce to be called an inhabitation of it. Moreover, they shall not inhabit the earth the righteous will, even the new earth, which none but righteous persons shall inhabit, (^{<6183>}2 Peter 3:13); see (^{<4970>}Psalm 37:9,11,22,29).

Ver. 31. *The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom*, etc.] As the earth brings forth its increase, and a tree brings forth its fruit; hence speech is called the fruit of the lips; wisdom is good fruit; a good man is comparable to the fruitful earth, and to a good tree; whose mouth brings forth wise things in abundance, which are very pleasant and profitable; not worldly wisdom, much less devilish; not merely natural wisdom, but spiritual and evangelical; (see ^{<4973>}Psalm 37:30);

but the froward tongue shall be cut out; or “cut down”^{f289}; as an unprofitable tree, which brings forth nothing but perverse things; things contrary to God and good men, to truth and right reason, to the light of nature, the law of God, and Gospel of Christ. Such “a tongue of perversities”^{f290}, as it may be rendered, that brings forth blasphemies against God, his tabernacle and his saints, as the tongue of antichrist does, deserves to be cut out, as the tongue of a blasphemer.

Ver. 32. *The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable*, etc.] To God and man; what is well pleasing to, God, and what ministers grace to the hearers, or what is grateful: and such things they will deliver out; they are used and accustomed to them; not only the righteous know in their judgment what is acceptable, but they use themselves to say those things; they not only know them in theory, but practise them: some men know what is acceptable, but their lips do not know it; they are not used to it, but the contrary;

but the mouth of the wicked [speaketh] frowardness; or perverse things, as before. Or, “the mouth of the wicked [knoweth] frowardness”^{f291}; or perverse things; or is used only to speak froward things; things contrary to truth and righteousness, and which they know to be so; their mouth speaks

things contrary to their hearts; their hearts and mouths do not agree, when they both flatter and lie.

CHAPTER 11

Ver. 1. *A false balance [is] abomination to the Lord*, etc.] Under which are included all false weights and measures, and all fraudulent practices in commerce and dealing; which are forbidden by the Lord, and are abominable to him, as being injurious to the estates and properties of men: and more especially must be abominable in professors of religion, as being contrary to the grace of God; for though there may be common honesty where there is not the grace of God, yet there cannot be the true grace of God where there is not honesty; for the grace of God teaches to deny all such worldly lusts;

but a just weight [is] his delight; or a “perfect stone”^{f292}; the ancient practice being to make use of stones for weights; Now to give just weight, and also just measure, and to do justly in all civil dealings with men, is what God requires, and is well pleasing in his sight^{f293}; (see ~~<B185>~~ Leviticus 19:35,36). This may be understood of balances and weights in religious affairs; the balance of the sanctuary is the word of God, with which all doctrines are to be weighed, and, if found wanting, they are to be rejected; this is agreeable to the will of God: false balances are abominable to him; such as carnal reason, vain philosophy, and the traditions of men, used by antichrist and his followers; the harlot, described in some preceding chapters, opposed to Wisdom or Christ, who directs to the search of the Scriptures, and the use of them to try doctrines by, (~~<B185>~~ John 5:39); (see ~~<H171>~~ Acts 17:11 ~~<G141>~~ 1 John 4:1).

Ver. 2. *[When] pride cometh, then cometh shame*, etc.] The one follows the other, or rather keep pace together; as soon as one comes, the other comes; as in the case of the angels that sinned, Adam and Eve, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, and others; and will be the case of the Romish antichrist, who, while vaunting and priding himself in his glory and grandeur, will fall into shame, disgrace, and destruction, (~~<B187>~~ Revelation 18:7,8);

but with the lowly [is] wisdom; or wisdom shall come, as Jarchi: the consequence of which is honour and glory; as with Christ, who is meek and lowly, are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; so with his humble followers, who reckon themselves the least of saints, and chief of sinners, and own that it is by the grace of God they are what they are, is true

wisdom; they are wise unto salvation, and in the way to honour and glory; such humble souls shall be exalted, (^{<0141>}Luke 14:11).

Ver. 3. *The integrity of the upright shall guide them*, etc.] The Spirit of God is the best guide of an upright man; he leads into all truth, and unto the land of uprightness, and continues to be a guide, even unto death; and it is right to walk after him, and not after the flesh: and besides him, the upright man has the word of God as a lamp to his feet, and a light to his paths, which he does well to take heed to; and next to that is the sincerity and uprightness of his heart, which will not suffer him, knowingly and willingly, to go aside into crooked paths, or to do amiss: integrity of heart and innocency of hand go together; such are the followers of the Lamb, as described, (^{<0140>}Revelation 14:4,5); (see ^{<0251>}Psalms 25:21);

but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them; the perverse ways, words, and actions of such as transgress the law of God, deal treacherously with God and men, as the word ^{f294} signifies, shall be their ruin: the perverse doctrines and worship of the man of sin, and his followers, shall bring destruction upon them, (^{<0104>}2 Thessalonians 2:4,8,12). The word for “perverseness” is only used here and in (^{<0154>}Proverbs 15:4); and there plainly signifies the perverseness of the tongue or speech, and so may have respect to corrupt doctrine.

Ver. 4. *Riches profit not in the day of wrath*, etc.] When God takes away the soul, and summons to judgment, and brings to it; and as riches profited not Rome Pagan, in the day of the Lamb’s wrath upon it; so neither will they profit Rome Papal, when it will come in remembrance before God, to give it the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; (see ^{<0165>}Revelation 6:15-17 18:15-17);

but righteousness delivereth from death; from the curse of a corporeal death; from the power of a spiritual one; and from dying the second or an eternal one; (see Gill on ^{<0102>}Proverbs 10:2”); the Targum is,

“from an evil death.”

Ver. 5. *The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way*, etc.] Or “make [it] plain”^{f295}; that is, the righteousness of those who are perfect in Christ, complete in him, perfectly justified by his righteousness; that righteousness makes their way plain; it is the direct way, the highway, the pathway to eternal life and happiness; see (^{<0128>}Proverbs 12:28);

but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness; or, “in his wickedness”^{f296}: in his own wicked way, which he has chosen and delights to walk in; he shall stumble therein, and fall into ruin and destruction, into hell and damnation: or by means or because of it he will fall; his wickedness will be the cause of his fall; as it will be the cause of the fall of Babylon, (~~f68D~~ Revelation 18:2,5).

Ver. 6. *The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them*, etc.] From death, as in (~~211D~~ Proverbs 11:4); and from falling by sin, totally and finally; or into it, so as to perish eternally; as well as it shall deliver those out of Babylon, who are the Lord’s people, that will be found therein when that is about to fall; (see ~~f68D~~ Revelation 18:4);

but transgressors shall be taken in [their own] naughtiness; in the very act of sin, and be punished for it; taken in it as in a net, and which they have spread for others, or as in a pit, which they have dug for others; taken as wild beasts are taken, to be destroyed; and that in the very midst of their wickedness, when fighting against God and the Lamb, as the beast and false prophet will, (~~f68D~~ Revelation 19:20).

Ver. 7. *When a wicked man dieth, [his] expectation shall perish*, etc.] His expectation of a longer life, of getting more riches, attaining to more honour, enjoying more pleasure here, and of having happiness hereafter, and of being delivered from wrath to come; he will then find, when he comes to die, that his expectations in this world are vain, and those which respect happiness in another world are ill-grounded; or when he dies, the expectation of others that depended on him, trusted in him, and looked for great things from him, will then be at an end;

and the hope of unjust [men] perisheth; which is as the giving up of the ghost, and expires when a man does; it is only in this life, or however it ceases when that does; he has no hope in his death, as the righteous man has; if he does not live without hope in the world, he has none when he goes out of it, or that will be of any use unto him: moreover, the hope of “unjust” men to oppress and injure others ceases when they die, (~~1817~~ Job 3:17). The word rendered unjust men is by some^{f297} understood of strength, substance, riches; and so the meaning may be, that such a hope that is placed in strength and riches perishes at death. Jarchi interprets it of children, which are a man’s substance; as if the sense was, that the hope of the children of such persons is then cut off.

Ver. 8. *The righteous is delivered out of trouble*, etc.] One after another he comes into, if not in this life, yet at death; which is to him a perfect deliverance out of all tribulation; (see ^{<6174>}Revelation 7:14); or when the wicked die, as in (^{<2117>}Proverbs 11:7), then the righteous are delivered from the trouble they gave them, or designed to give them; though it seems rather to design deliverance from trouble in the first sense, since it follows,

and the wicked cometh in his stead; as Haman did in the room of Mordecai, and was hanged upon the gallows the other was delivered from, and he had prepared for him, (^{<1710>}Esther 7:10); and as Daniel was delivered from the lion's den, and his enemies thrown into it, (^{<2724>}Daniel 6:24); and as in the latter day the righteous will be delivered from all their persecutors, and antichrist will be destroyed with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming; and then they that destroyed the earth shall be destroyed themselves, (^{<6118>}Revelation 11:18).

Ver. 9. *An hypocrite with [his] mouth destroyeth his neighbour*, etc.] Deceives him with his flatteries and lies, and draws him into destructive schemes and practices; or "corrupts" him, as the word ^{f298} signifies, and as the Targum renders it, with false doctrines; so, with fair words and good speeches, such who lie in wait to deceive impose upon the simple and credulous; and false teachers, with their damnable heresies, bring swift destruction on men; and particularly antichrist and his emissaries, through speaking lies in hypocrisy, corrupt and destroy many, (^{<501>}1 Timothy 4:1,2);

but through knowledge shall the just be delivered; from the hypocrite and deceitful worker, and from being corrupted and destroyed by the words of his mouth: Jarchi says, through the knowledge of the law, which warns against him; but rather through the knowledge of the Gospel, which the just man has; for as by this such escape the pollutions of the world, so likewise they are delivered, are kept and secured, from the error of the wicked: through a man's knowledge of himself, of his descent from Adam, of the corruption of his nature, of the plague of his heart, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; of his lost and undone state; of his impotency to that which is good, of his incapacity to fulfil the law, and atone for sin; and of the insufficiency of his own righteousness to justify him before God; he is delivered and preserved from giving into the notions of the purity of human nature, the power of free will, and the doctrine of justification by works: through his knowledge of the person of Christ; of his offices and

relations; of him as a Saviour; of the efficacy of his blood, the excellency of his righteousness, and the completeness of his sacrifice; and through the knowledge of God in Christ, and of the Spirit and of his operations of grace, as well as of the sacred Scriptures in general; he is safe from being carried away with any errors concerning any of the divine Persons, particularly concerning the deity, sonship, and satisfaction of Christ; in short, as ignorance is the mother of devotion, superstition, and error, in the church of Rome, spiritual experimental knowledge of the above things is the best preservative from all errors and heresies which corrupt and destroy the souls of men, to be found in that apostate church, or elsewhere.

Ver. 10. *When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth,* etc.] As it always does, even in the worst of times; in times of public calamity and distress, and when enemies rise up on all hands; it is well with them in life, in death, and to all eternity; (see ^{<2180>}Isaiah 3:10); but there are particular times when it goes well with them, which is matter of joy to others; when they prosper in the world, increase in riches and honour, and are advanced to places of authority and trust; just magistrates in a city or commonwealth are a blessing, and so cause joy; (see ^{<2180>}Proverbs 29:2); and when it goes well with them in spiritual things, they increase in gifts and grace, the humble hear of it and are glad; the city or church of God, the community of the saints, rejoice: and as it went well with them in Constantine's time, when Paganism was destroyed and persecution ceased; and at the time of the reformation, when the pure doctrines of the Gospel were revived, which were both times of joy to the city of God; so in the latter day, when the Lord's people will be righteous, the church will be the joy of many generations; and when the kingdom shall be given to the saints of the most High, and the kingdoms of the world become the Lord's and his Christ's, there will be great voices in heaven, rejoicings in the church, and a new song sung, (^{<2180>}Isaiah 60:21,15 ^{<6115>}Revelation 11:15,17 14:3,4);

and when the wicked perish, [there is] shouting; as there will be great rejoicings, shoutings, and hallelujahs, when Babylon is fallen, (^{<6180>}Revelation 18:20,21 19:1,2).

Ver. 11. *By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted,* etc.] That is, either by the blessings with which they are blessed; and these are either temporal or spiritual: when good men are blessed with temporal blessings, the place where they live is the better it; and especially the poor, for they do not eat their morsel alone; and where there are many of these, and in

prosperous circumstances, it is the exaltation and glory of a city taken in a literal sense; and which is the more blessed for their sakes, as well as they themselves are a blessing to it: and as the upright are blessed with spiritual blessings, with blessings indeed, with the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God; when they are fruitful and flourishing in grace, the city or church of God is in an exalted state: or rather this is to be understood of the blessings with which the upright bless others; and may be interpreted of the blessed deeds or good works which they do, and which are profitable to men; or of their blessed counsel and advice which they give on emergent occasions, and which proves salutary, and for the good of the city; or rather for their blessed prayers which they put up for the peace and prosperity of it, and which succeed. So by the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, or by the blessed doctrines of his apostles, those upright and sincere ministers of the word, the city of the living God was greatly exalted in their times; as it also was in the times of Constantine, and at the reformation; and this now is a reason why the city rejoices at its going well with the righteous, whether in temporals or spirituals. So Aben Ezra thinks the words have a connection with the former;

but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked; by the corrupt communication which proceeds out of their mouths; by their obscene and filthy talk the inhabitants of a place are corrupted; evil communications corrupt good manners; by their swearing and cursing, their oaths and imprecations, by their lying and perjury, they bring the judgments of God upon a city, to the overthrow of it. So by false doctrines, as the faith of particular persons is subverted, so whole cities, or visible congregated churches, have been corrupted and destroyed, as with the Arian heresy and others.

Ver. 12. *He that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbour,* etc.] Not only in his heart, but by giving him opprobrious language; he speaks contemptibly of him, either because he thinks he is wiser than his neighbour, and therefore calls him fool at every turn; as those who are most destitute of wisdom conceit they have the largest share of it, and despise others; or else because he is richer than his neighbour, as the poor is generally despised by the rich; or because he fancies he is holier than he, as the Pharisee who trusts in himself that he is righteous, and despises others: or a man “that wants a heart”,^{f299} as it may be rendered; that wants a good one, or wants grace in his heart; he despises the counsel and advice,

the admonitions and instructions, which his neighbour gives him for his good;

but a man of understanding holdeth his peace: and will not despise his neighbour, or give him ill language, because he is not so wise, or so rich, or so righteous as he; if he cannot speak any good of him, he will not speak evil of him; or he holds his peace, is silent, and will not answer the man void of wisdom, that despises and reproaches him; he will not render railing for railing; when he is reviled he will revile not again; and by so doing he shows himself to be a man understanding, or of intellects; a wise and prudent.

Ver. 13. *A talebearer revealeth secrets,* etc.] The Arabic version adds, in the congregation, openly and publicly; that goes about with tales from place to place, who is like a walking merchant or peddler, as the word^{f300} signifies; who takes up his wares at one place, and exposes them to sale, and vends them at another; so a talebearer, he goes from house to house, and picks up tales at one place and carries them to another and tells them; and as by his going about he gets into the secrets of persons and families, or is intrusted with them, his character not being known, he reveals them to others, and so breaks the trust committed to him (see ^{<5453>}1 Timothy 5:13). The Targum and Syriac version render it “an accuser”; and the same name is given to the devil in the New Testament, and indeed such a man is no better;

but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter; that is “faithful” to his friend, that trusts him with his secrets, of which there are but few; he “conceals the matter” he is entrusted with: “the things”, as the Septuagint version; the secrets which are imparted to him; or “the word”,^{f301} that he has heard, and has been spoken to him in privacy, and in strict friendship: or he “covers the matter”^{f302} or thing; he hides the infirmities of his friend and neighbour, and does not expose them as the talebearer does; (see ^{<6008>}1 Peter 4:8).

Ver. 14. *Where no counsel [is], the people fall,* etc.] Where there is no wise and prudent, sound and good counsel, as the word signifies; where that is not, there had as good be none, or better; a people, a kingdom, a commonwealth, nation, or city, fall into ruin and destruction, or into schemes which bring them to it; they are like a ship without a pilot, or without a helm, or one to steer it: the Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions, render it,

“where there is no governor;”

and the Arabic version,

“they that have no providence (or forecast) fall as a leaf falls;”

and so the Septuagint version,

“they that have no government fall as leaves,”

as leaves fall in autumn; and the word signifies the helm of government^{f303}, in allusion to a ship;

but in the multitude of counsellors [there is] safety; because what one may miss another may hit upon; and, if they agree in their advice, it may be the more depended upon; and, if not, yet their different sentiments being compared together, and the reasons of them, a person may the better judge which is best to follow, and what is fit to be done: it may be rendered, “in the greatness” or “largeness of a counsellor”^{f304}, for the word is in the singular number; that is, in the large capacity or endowments of a counsellor; in one that is abundantly qualified for a counsellor; whose abilities are not to be questioned; in the advice of such an one a man may safely confide; and who that answers to this character as Jesus Christ, the wonderful Counsellor? in whose counsel we may rest with the greatest safety; and which may be found in his word, in the Scriptures, which David says should be the men of his counsel, (^{<302>}Psalm 119:24); (see ^{<306>}Isaiah 9:6 28:29).

Ver. 15. *He that is surety for a stranger shall smart [for it]*, etc.] Or in “breaking shall be broken”^{f305}, ruined and undone; he engaging or becoming a bondsman for one whose circumstances he knew not; and these being bad bring a load upon him, such an heavy debt as crushes him to pieces. Mr. Henry observes that our Lord Jesus Christ became a surety for us when we were strangers, and he smarted for it, he was bruised and wounded for our sins; but then he knew our circumstances, and what the consequence would be, and became a surety on purpose to pay the whole debt and set us free; which he was capable of doing: without being broken or becoming a bankrupt himself; for he was not broken, nor did he fail, (^{<304>}Isaiah 42:4). Jarchi’s note is,

“the wicked shall be broken, to whose heart idolatry is sweet;”

and he that hateth suretyship is sure; or those “that strike”^{f306}, that is, with the hand, used in suretyship; (see ²¹⁶⁸Proverbs 6:1); such an one is safe from coming into trouble by such means. The Targum is,

“and hates those that place their hope in God.”

Ver. 16. *A gracious woman retaineth honour*, etc.] Or “a woman of grace”^{f307} one that has the grace of God in her heart, and is of a virtuous conversation, and by both amiable and lovely to others; as she receives honour or glory from them, which she deserves, so she retains the same. The Targum is,

“a gracious woman divides glory;”

that is, between herself and her husband; to which the Arabic version agrees, which renders it,

“a gracious woman raises up glory to her husband.”

Jarchi interprets it of the congregation of Israel; his note is,

“the congregation of Israel continually draws nigh to the glory of God and his law;”

and it may be applied to the true church of Christ, which seeks the glory of Christ, and retains the glory of Gospel doctrines, of Gospel ordinances, of Gospel discipline, and of Gospel conversation, when the harlot, the apostate church, has lost all honour of these things;

and strong [men] retain riches: some render it, “as strong men retain riches”^{f308}; as they, when they have got them into their possession, keep them, it being in the power of their hands so to do, against all that would take them from them; so a gracious woman is as tenacious of her honour for chastity, modesty, wisdom, and conduct: or by those “strong men”, or “terrible [and] violent” ones, as the word^{f309} signifies, may be meant the beast of Rome and his followers, cruel persecutors; whose principal care it is to amass the riches and wealth of others, which, when they have got, they hold fast.

Ver. 17. *The merciful man doeth good to his own soul*, etc.] Or “to himself”: a man of mercy or grace, a liberal bountiful man, he comfortably enjoys what God has given him, (²⁰⁵⁸Ecclesiastes 5:18); and he does good

to others with it, and thereby does good to himself also; as well as he is solicitous in a spiritual sense for the good and welfare of his immortal soul;

but [he that is] cruel troubleth his own flesh; a sordid avaricious man withholds from himself that which is meet, will not allow himself the necessaries of life, nor will he provide that which is fit and convenient for his family; he hides himself from his own flesh, and will not communicate to the wants of his nearest friends and relations, and shuts up his bowels of compassion against his own brother; all which may be called a troubling his own flesh; (see ^{<2383>}Isaiah 58:7). R. Levi Ben Gersom interprets this of such who place religion in afflicting and macerating the body by fasting, which the law does not require; and it may fitly be applied to the Papists, who do this by penances and fastings, and whippings and scourgings; and which the apostle calls a neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh, (^{<5122>}Colossians 2:23).

Ver. 18. *The wicked worketh a deceitful work*, etc.] Such a wicked man as before described; that neither enjoys the good things of life he has, nor suffers others to enjoy them; and all to accumulate riches, which are deceitful and perishing; and who abstains from meats, which God has created for use, under a pretence of religion, and so deceives his own soul; and indeed every sin which a wicked man commits is a deceitful work; it promises him that pleasure, or profit, or liberty, which it does not give him, and in the issue is the ruin of him; and so all false doctrines, propagated by deceitful workers, are deceitful works, by which they deceive the simple, and at last themselves; they “obtain a deceitful reward of [their] work”, as Gussetius^{f310} renders it;

but to him that soweth righteousness; does acts of beneficence and liberality; (see ^{<4709>}2 Corinthians 9:9,10); and all other good works, or works of righteousness,

[shall be] a sure reward; according to what a man sows, and the manner in which he sows, so shall he reap, (^{<4706>}2 Corinthians 9:6 ^{<808>}Galatians 6:8); or, “a reward of truth”; instead of being given up to believe a lie, he shall receive the love of the truth, and abide in it, which will bring him to eternal glory and happiness; he being chosen to it through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, (^{<5120>}2 Thessalonians 2:10-13); and, instead of a deceitful reward, shall have a true, real, solid, and substantial one.

Ver. 19. *As righteousness [tendeth] to life*, etc.] Or, is unto life: not mere outward acts of moral righteousness; these may be done where there is no principle of spiritual life, and are no other than dead works, and will never bring to everlasting life; indeed the best righteousness of man's is no justification of life, nor can it entitle to it, nor is meritorious of it. Godliness, or true holiness, has the promise of this life and that to come, (^{<5048>}1 Timothy 4:8); and so here in the Hebrew text it is, “unto lives”,^{f311} in the plural number. Internal grace, or powerful godliness, which is the new man that is created in righteousness, gives a meetness for everlasting life, and issues in it; particularly the righteousness of Christ, as that is a perfectly justifying one; it makes a man alive in a law sense, and gives a title and claim to eternal life;

so he that pursueth evil [pursueth it] to his own death; or, it is “to his own death”; it issues in that: not he that is overtaken in a fault, or falls into sin through the infirmity of the flesh and the force of temptation, but such who eagerly follow after it and overtake it; who give up themselves unto it, weary themselves in committing it, draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope; these often by their sins bring diseases upon them, which end in a corporeal death; or by means of which they come into the hand of the civil magistrate, and are capitally punished; and, however, die the second death, or an eternal one, the just wages of sin, (^{<6163>}Romans 6:23).

Ver. 20. *They that are of a froward heart [are] abomination to the Lord*, etc.] Such as are men of perverse dispositions and principles; that are contrary to the light of nature, the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; who, like the Jews of old, please not God, and are contrary to all men, to all good men; as antichrist and his followers, these work abomination, and make a lie, and speak lies in hypocrisy; are double hearted men, hypocrites, that say one thing and mean another; and, under the pretence of religion, do the vilest things: such of all men are abominable in the sight of God, and will have their portion in the lake of fire, in the hottest place in hell, as hypocrites will, (^{<6208>}Revelation 21:8,27 ^{<4051>}Matthew 24:51);

but [such as are] upright in [their] way [are] his delight; or, “in the way”; there being no need of a supplement: such as are in the way, Christ, and walk by faith in him, and in the paths of truth and holiness, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless, who are the “undefiled in the way”, as in (^{<9300>}Psalms 119:1), where the same words are

used as here: or, are “perfect” in Christ; though not in faith, nor in their walk and conversation; yet are sincere, Israelites indeed, and walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel. These the Lord takes delight and pleasure in; he is well pleased with their persons in Christ; and in their walk and works, as they flow from right principles, and are directed to right ends, and being upright in all; (see ^{<6841>}Psalm 84:11).

Ver. 21. [*Though hand [join] in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished*, etc.] Though they give the hand to one another, unite in their counsels, enter into combinations, confederacies, and strict alliances, and join all their force and strength together; or though with both hands, with all their might and main, endeavour to secure themselves, yet they shall not go unpunished. This may be exemplified in the kings of the earth, that will join each other, and gather their armies together, to make war against Christ; when they will be conquered, taken, and slain, (^{<6699>}Revelation 19:19-21). Jarchi interprets it, “from hand to hand”, and explains it thus; from the hand of God into their hand shall come the reward of their work, and shall not go unpunished: to which may be added, even though there may be a succession of parents and children, and their substance may be handed down from the one to the other, yet at last just punishments will take place. To which is opposed,

but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered; these are the seed of the church in all successive ages; the seed that are accounted of by the Lord for a generation; particularly the remnant of the woman’s seed, that keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ; against whom the dragon, the old serpent the devil, was wroth, and went forth to make war, in order utterly to destroy them; but they escaped his hands, were delivered from him, and preserved by the power and grace of God, as a seed to serve him, (^{<627>}Revelation 12:17).

Ver. 22. [*As a jewel of gold in a swine’s snout*, etc.] The allusion seems to be to the ringing of swine, to prevent their rooting up the earth; which is usually done by putting an iron ring into their snout; which is much more proper and suitable than a gold ring, or a jewel set in gold, which is very unbecoming such a creature; and is soon had to the dunghill, or to some miry place, and there defiled;

[so is] a fair woman which is without discretion; or, “has departed from taste”^{<312>}; from a taste of virtue and honour; lost all sense of modesty and chastity; forsaken her husband, and given up herself to the embraces of

others. As her beauty is fitly expressed by a “jewel of gold”, which is valuable and desirable, and, rightly placed and used, is ornamental; so she is properly represented by a swine, wallowing in the impurities of lust; to which her beauty was the snare, and whereby it is quickly sullied and lost. Jarchi applies this to a disciple of a wise man, or a scholar that departs from the good way, or from the law; which he explains by taste or sense: but it may be better applied to the scarlet whore, or apostate church of Rome; which has departed from Christ, once her professed husband; from the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; from all taste and savour of true religion; and even from common sense and right reason, as in the affair of transubstantiation, and other things; and may be fitly compared to a swine with a jewel of gold in its snout, being “decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls”; and yet “drunk with the blood of the saints”, and “martyrs of Jesus”; and wallowing in all the faith of fornication, of idolatry, and superstition; as well as in all manner of other sins and iniquities, (⁶⁶⁷⁰⁴Revelation 17:4-6).

Ver. 23. *The desire of the righteous [is] only good*, etc.] Or, “what is good”^{f313}; only good is the object of it. His desire is to do good, and that only; though he does not always do what he would do: as he delights in the law of God, after the inward man; as he is a righteous, holy, and good man, and would be conformable thereunto, and serves it with his mind, will, and affections; his desires are to the Lord, and to the remembrance of his name; he desires his favour, the discoveries of his love, communion with him, and communications of grace from him; he desires all spiritual good things, and everything that is good, for himself and others, and which he desires in submission to the will of God; and all things do work for and issue in his good. Good is what he is continually desirous of, wishing and praying for; and good is what he has eventually here and hereafter: though there may be many irregular and unlawful desires in him at times, and all things he has may not seem good; yet acting as a good man, his desires are only good, and there is nothing attends him but what is for his good;

[but] the expectation of the wicked [is] wrath; what he is desirous of, wishing, and looking for, is wrath and vengeance upon all that displease him, and he is angry with; he desires no good to them, but evil; he desires and hopes for nothing but what is offensive to God, and will bring upon him his fierce wrath and sore displeasure; so that eventually nothing else will be the fruit and consequence of his expectation and hope; and some are so shockingly profane, and so dreadfully hardened, that they wait for

hell, as Jarchi on the place observes; they look for damnation and expect it, and are easy about it.

Ver. 24. *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth*, etc.] That scattereth “his own”, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions add: that disperses his money here and there, among many poor objects, plentifully and liberally; and his substance is so far from being lessened by such a conduct, that, by the blessing of God, it is increased more and more; or “become richer”, as the Vulgate Latin; (see ^{<SB>}Psalm 112:9). So he that disperses and dispenses the word of God, and spreads the truths of the Gospel, and freely and fully preaches them, increases himself in spiritual knowledge and understanding;

and [there is] that withholdeth more than is meet; or, “right” or “just”^{f314}, by the, laws of God and men; from himself, from his family, from his friends and relations, and from the poor of the church and of the world; and from the cause and interest of Christ, and what is necessary to support that, according to his ability;

but [it tendeth] to poverty, or “want”^{f315}: such a man is often brought to beggary; there is a moth and rottenness sent into his substance, which secretly consume it: so he that withholds any truth or doctrine, that keeps back anything that may be profitable to the saints; this tends to the impoverishing: of his soul, and the souls of them that attend on his ministry.

Ver. 25. *The liberal soul shall be made fat*, etc.] Or, “the soul of blessing”^{f316}: that is, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “the soul which blesseth”; not that merely prays for a blessing upon others, and wishes them well, and gives them good words; but bestows blessings on them, gives good things unto them liberally, cheerfully, and plentifully; and so is a blessing to the poor, and receives a blessing from them again; as such also do from the Lord, by whom they are “made fat”; or are blessed with temporal and spiritual blessings; and are in thriving and flourishing circumstances, both in soul and body. So he that comes full fraught with the blessing of the Gospel of Christ to others is enriched with it himself, and becomes more and more flourishing in gifts and grace;

and he that watereth shall be watered also himself; he that largely shares with others, like a flowing fountain of water, shall have an abundance communicated to him again from God, the inexhaustible fountain of

mercies. Watering the plants in Christ's vineyard is one part of the work of a Gospel minister; "I have planted, Apollos watered", etc. (~~4886~~1 Corinthians 3:6-8); and such who do their work well are watered, rewarded, refreshed, and comforted of God, being largely taught and richly furnished for such service by him; so the Targum,

"and he that teacheth, also he himself shall learn."

Ver. 26. *He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him*, etc.] That hoards it up for a better price, in hopes of a better market; and does not bring it out, and expose it to sale, when there is a scarcity of it; so the Targum adds, "in famine"; or, "in straits", as the Syriac version; in a time of distress through, famine: this will bring the curse of the poor upon him, who will imprecate the most dreadful things on him and his family. Jarchi interprets it of the law, and of withholding the teaching of it; but it may be better applied to the Gospel, and the withholding the ministration of that, and so causing a famine, not of bread and of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; which is done by the Papists, by prohibiting Gospel ministers preaching the word; forbidding the people to read it in their own language; locking it up from them in a language they understand not; and so starve the souls of men, which brings upon them a curse;

but blessing [shall be] upon the head of him that selleth [it]; at a moderate price, so that the poor may be able to come at it; such will have their blessing; they will wish all happiness to them and their families, here and hereafter. Or, "that breaks"^{f317} it; separates it from the heap, breaks and grinds it into flour, and then sells it: or imparts it freely; so the Septuagint version, "that communicates": and the Arabic version, "that gives"; and may be fitly applied to a faithful minister of the Gospel, who breaks the bread of life, and freely and plentifully imparts it to the souls of men; and who has the hearty prayers and good wishes of the people to whom he ministers. The master of a family used to break the bread, as Christ often did.

Ver. 27. *He that diligently seeketh good*, etc.] Or "early"; who rises early in the morning, as the word^{f318} signifies, and seeks both to do good, and to enjoy it all the day; who, in the first place, seeks the kingdom of God and his righteousness; who, in the morning of his youth, inquires after the best things; and diligently pursues what is for his own good and welfare, and that of others, and for the glory of God:

procureth favour, both of God and men: or, “seeketh favour”^{f319}; or that which is acceptable and well-pleasing unto God;

but he that seeketh mischief, it shall come unto him; that seeks to do hurt to others; that which he seeks to do to them shall come upon himself; (see ⁴⁹⁹⁵Psalm 9:15); so antichrist, that leads into captivity, shall go into captivity; and that kills with the sword, shall be killed by it, (⁶⁶³⁰Revelation 13:10).

Ver. 28. *He that trusteth in his riches shall fall*, etc.] As leaves in autumn, which are withered and dry. To trust in riches is to trust in uncertain things; things not to be depended on, being here today and gone tomorrow; it is like leaning upon a broken staff, which giving way, the person falls: and so the fall of Babylon will be, while she is trusting in and boasting of her riches and grandeur, (⁶⁶³⁰Revelation 18:7,8);

but the righteous shall flourish as a branch; that abides in the tree, is alive and green, full of leaves, and laden with fruit: so the righteous are as branches in Christ, and receive life and nourishment from him, and abide in him; and bring forth fruit and flourish, like palm trees and cedars, in the house of the Lord, and grow in every grace, and in the knowledge of Christ; (see ²⁴⁷⁰⁷Jeremiah 17:7,8).

Ver. 29. *He that troubleth his own house*, etc.] His family, his wife, and children, and servants; by being bitter to the one, and by provoking the others to wrath, and continually giving out menacing words to the rest; or through idleness, not providing for his family; or through an over worldly spirit, pushing on business, and hurrying it on beyond measure; or through a niggardly and avaricious temper, withholding meat and drink, and clothes convenient for them; see (³¹⁵⁷Proverbs 15:27); or through profuseness and prodigality. Such an one

shall inherit the wind; nothing but vanity and emptiness; he shall come to nothing, and get nothing; and what he does, he shall not keep, and on which he cannot live;

and the fool [shall be] servant to the wise of heart; he who has both got and lost his substance in a foolish way shall be so reduced as to become a servant to him who has pursued wise measures, both in getting and keeping what he has; and to whom perhaps the fool formerly stood in the relation of a master. Such a change will be with respect to antichrist and the saints, (²⁰²⁵Daniel 7:25-27).

Ver. 30. *The fruit of the righteous [is] a tree of life*, etc.] Either the fruit which grows upon Christ, the tree of life, and which they receive from him; even all the blessings of grace, peace, pardon, righteousness, and life, (^{<4017>}Revelation 2:7); or the fruits which the righteous bring forth under the influence of divine grace; they are trees of righteousness, and are filled with the fruits of righteousness by Christ, and have their fruit unto holiness, and their end everlasting life. Aben Ezra interprets it,

“the fruit of the righteous is as the fruit of the tree of life;”

that is, lovely, beautiful, desirable, salutary, and issues in life;

and he that winneth souls [is] wise; antichrist trades in the souls of men, that is one part of his wares, (^{<4013>}Revelation 18:13); but his negotiations about them are to the loss, and not to the saving of them: whereas wise and faithful ministers of the word, such as are here described, use all prudent methods to gain and save the souls of men, (^{<4019>}1 Corinthians 9:19-22); even their precious immortal souls, which are of more worth than a world, are the immediate production of God, made after his image, which by sin they come short of; and having sinned, are liable to eternal death; the redemption of which is precious; the charge of which Christ has taken, and therefore is called the Shepherd and Bishop of souls; and which he commits to the care of his under shepherds, who watch for them, as they that must give an account. To “win” them is to teach them, for the word^{f320} has the signification of teaching or doctrine; (see ^{<4042>}Proverbs 4:2); the ministers of Christ are teachers, qualified and sent by him as such; and their business is to teach men their state by nature, how sinful, miserable, and helpless they are; and also Christ, and the way of life by him; that salvation is in him, and in no other; that justification is only by his righteousness, peace and pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice: they also teach various other things; as the fear of God, faith in Christ, love to him, and obedience to all his commands. To win souls is to proselyte them and convert them to the true religion; to bring them into a love and liking of it, and to embrace it: the souls that Abraham got or made in Haran are supposed to be such; and the same with those trained or instructed in his house, whom he armed for the rescue of Lot, (^{<4125>}Genesis 12:5 14:14); the former of which texts Jarchi compares with this, as explanative of it. The phrases of “turning many to righteousness”, done by the “wise”: and of “converting a sinner from the error of his way”, whereby a “soul is saved from death”, (^{<2712>}Daniel 12:3 ^{<3021>}James 5:20), are a proper comment on

these words: which, moreover, may be rendered, “he that taketh souls”^{f321}; as a fort or castle is taken, and which is sometimes expressed by “winning”; (see ^{<430>}2 Chronicles 32:1 ^{<4080>}Proverbs 18:9). The soul of man is a hold, and a strong hold, of foul spirits; it is Satan’s palace or castle, which he keeps and holds against Christ, but is won and taken by him; which is usually done by means of the word, and the ministry of it, which are made effectual to the pulling down of strong holds, (^{<4704>}2 Corinthians 10:4,5). Or the allusion is to the taking or catching of birds in a snare, or fishes in a net. The souls of men are got into the snare of the devil, and they are taken out from hence by breaking this snare; by which means they escape the hands of the fowler, Satan, and come into better hands: the old serpent laid a bait for our first parents, by which he gained his point, and that was the fruit of the forbidden tree; but the bait which wise men lay to catch souls is the fruit of the tree of life, mentioned in the former clause, the blessings of grace in Christ. Again, Christ’s ministers are called “fishers” of men, and are said to “catch” men, (^{<4089>}Matthew 4:19 ^{<4510>}Luke 5:10); which they do by casting and spreading the net of the Gospel; the Gospel is the net; the world is the sea into which it is cast; where natural men are in their element, as fishes in the sea: the casting of the net is the preaching of the Gospel; and by means of this souls are caught and gathered in to Christ and his churches, (^{<4037>}Matthew 13:47,48). Once more, the words are by some rendered, “he that allures souls”^{f322}; which is done, not by the terrors of the law, but by the charming voice of the Gospel; by which souls are drawn to God and Christ, and brought among his people: and one that is an instrument of all this had need be “wise”, and so he appears to be; he that teacheth men the knowledge of divine and spiritual things had need to be as he is, as a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God; he who is to be the instrument of converting sinners must have a mouth and wisdom to address them in a proper manner; as he that wills a castle, or takes a fort, ought to have military skill as well as courage; and to cast a net well requires art as well as strength.

Ver. 31. *Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth*, etc.] Which Aben Ezra understands of the recompence of their good works. There is a reward for the righteous, and which they have now in keeping, though not “for” keeping, the commandments of God; they have the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come, and which is made good to them; they have every good thing now which is proper and convenient for them; and they shall be recompensed in the new earth, in

which only righteous persons will dwell. But it seems better, with Jarchi, to interpret it of the recompence of their sins and transgressions; that is, of their chastisements and afflictions, with which they are chastised by their heavenly Father, when they sin against him; which are all in love and for their good; and which they have only here on earth, while they are in this world; they will be all over in another, when there will be no more sin, and no more chastisement for it, much less condemnation; (see ^{<4113>}1 Corinthians 11:32);

much more the wicked and the sinner; who shall not only be punished on earth as they often are, but in hell to all eternity. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render the whole thus; “if the righteous be scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” Which words are used by the Apostle Peter, to show, that if judgment or chastisement begin at the house of God, or with the righteous, that the end of the wicked must be very bad; which entirely agrees with the sense of this passage; (see ^{<4117>}1 Peter 4:17,18); a “behold” is prefixed to the whole, as a note, either of admiration, or rather of attention to what is sure and certain, and worthy of regard and consideration. The Targum is,

“behold, the righteous are strengthened in the earth; but the wicked and the sinners shall be consumed out of the earth;”

which seems to agree with Aben Ezra’s sense of the words; see (^{<4115>}Psalm 104:35).

CHAPTER 12

Ver. 1. *Whose loveth instruction loveth knowledge*, etc.] That loves the instruction of Wisdom, or Christ, (⁽²⁰¹³⁾Proverbs 4:13 8:10); the means of instruction, the Scriptures, which are profitable for instruction in righteousness, and are written for our learning; the Gospel, which instructs into the person, office, and grace of Christ; the ministers of the word, who are so many instructors in Christ; and even the rod of afflictions, by which men are taught their duty, and the will of God: and these are to be loved; and he that loves them clearly shows that he loves knowledge; since the means of instruction, making use of them, and getting instruction by them, are attended with labour, trouble, and difficulty; which a man would not choose, had he not a love unto and a desire after knowledge, and an increase of it; as the knowledge of God, of Christ, and of his truths. Aben Ezra inverts the words;

“he that loves knowledge loves instruction;”

but the sense is much the same;

but he that hateth reproof [is] brutish; or a “beast”⁽³²³⁾: as the man that is willing to be instructed, in order to gain knowledge, shows himself to be a wise and understanding man; so he that hates the reproof the word of God gives, or the ministers of it, or God by them, appears to be no better than a brute, than the horse or mule that want understanding: so the man of sin hates the Scriptures, the Gospel, and the ministers of it, and the reproofs and convictions they give of his idolatry, superstition, and will worship; nor does he care that his doctrines and practices should be brought to this test, or that the people should have knowledge of them; but keeps them from them, and sets up his own infallibility as the rule of judgment; and it is one character of his followers, that they “receive not the love of the truth”, (⁽⁵²⁰⁾2 Thessalonians 2:10); and both he and they are represented by a beast, (⁽⁶³⁰⁾Revelation 13:1,11 17:3); and are more brutish than any man; see (⁽¹⁵¹⁾Proverbs 5:11,12).

Ver. 2. *A good [man] obtaineth favour of the Lord*, etc.] One that is made so by the grace of God, for no man is so naturally; there is none good, nor does good, no, not one, until some good thing is put into him, or the good work of grace is begun in him. And such a man obtains favour or good will

from the Lord; that is, as Gersom explains it, what he himself wills, for the will of God is his will; or rather the good will of God, his grace, and layout; fresh manifestations and discoveries of which he obtains and enjoys, not by merit, through any goodness of his own, or by means of his obedience but he draws it out, as the word^{f324} signifies, as out of a fountain, by prayer and supplication, and by fresh repeated acts of faith upon it; which may be said to be ad and enjoyed, when it is remembered to him, he is encompassed with it, or it is shed abroad in his heart, or his heart is directed into it; and he also obtains and enjoys all the blessings, of grace here, and glory hereafter, as springing from it;

but a man of wicked devices will he condemn; whose thoughts, and the imaginations of his heart, are evil continually; who is always contriving mischief to others: such a man shall be so far from enjoying the favour of God, that he shall be pronounced guilty of death, and condemned to it; he shall be banished from the presence of the Lord, and be punished with everlasting destruction. As the man of sin is continually devising wicked things against God, against Christ, against his interest and people; he shall be condemned by the Lord, consumed with the breath of his mouth; go into perdition, and be cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone: and this will be the portion of all his followers, that join with him in forming and executing his wicked devices.

Ver. 3. *A man shall not be established by wickedness*, etc.] Not any man, though he may be established in his wickedness, so as not to be rooted out of it; yet he cannot be so established by it as not to be removed from a prosperous state and condition into an unhappy and distressed one; he may seem to be in a firm and settled state of prosperity, amidst all his wickedness; be like a green bay tree, spreading itself, and seemingly immovable, when on a sudden it is blown down and rooted up, and is no more: so Babylon will seem to be in a settled state of grandeur, ease, and rest, and say, “I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow”; when in one day, and in one hour, her destruction shall come upon her, (~~680~~ Revelation 18:7,8);

but the root of the righteous shall not be moved; they are rooted and grounded in the love of God, which is immovable; they are rooted and built up in Christ, and so are as Mount Zion, which can never be removed; the root of the matter, or of grace, is in them, which can never be lost; while others wither away, because they have no root in them, these abide; and though they may be shaken with the persecutions of men, the temptations

of Satan, the errors of the wicked, and their own corruptions, yet they afresh take root again downward, and bring forth fruit upward.

Ver. 4. *A virtuous woman [is] a crown to her husband,* etc.] One that is loving and chaste, constant and faithful, obsequious and submissive to him; that is diligent in the affairs of her house, takes care of her family, brings up her children, and keeps up a good order and decorum among her servants, is an honour and credit to her husband. Such is the true church of Christ, who is compared to a woman, (^{f321} Revelation 12:1); to a woman of purity and chastity, whose members are virgins, not defiled with the corruptions, errors, and superstition of the apostate church; to a woman of fortitude and courage, as the word ^{f325} signifies, who resists sin, temptation, error, heresy, and idolatry, even unto blood; and whose true members love not their lives unto death, but freely lay them down in the cause of truth; such an one is an honour to Christ her husband;

but she that maketh ashamed; makes her husband ashamed, by her levity and wantonness, her negligence and slothfulness, so that he is ashamed to be seen with her, or to be known that he stands in such a relation to her; she

[is] as rottenness in his bones; a constant grief to his mind, a pressure upon his spirits, a wasting of his body, and a consumption of his estate; she is, as the Targum has it, “as a worm in wood”, which rots and consumes it ^{f326}; so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Thus the apostate church of Rome, that professes to be the spouse of Christ, has made him ashamed of her; as being the Jezebel, that seduces his servants to fornication or idolatry; and whose doctrine and superstition eat, like a canker, the vitals of religion.

Ver. 5. *The thoughts of the righteous [are] right,* etc.] Or “judgment” ^{f327}. The thoughts of men’s hearts are naturally evil, nor can any think a good thought of themselves; but the thoughts of the righteous are directed and influenced by the grace of God, and are formed according to that Word which is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart; their thoughts concerning God and religion, concerning Christ and his Gospel, his ways and worship, his truths and ordinances, they are judiciously framed according to the rule of God’s word, the revelation he has made, and so are right; and such are their resolutions and designs to serve the Lord their God, and him only, and to cleave to him with full purpose of heart

[but] the counsels of the wicked [are] deceit; the designs, schemes, and contrivances of wicked men, are to trick, and overreach, and defraud their neighbours in civil affairs; and of false teachers, to deceive the hearts of the simple in religious ones. The coming of the man of sin was with all deceivableness; and all the gaudy show and pageantry he makes, and pretended miracles he works, are to deceive the inhabitants of the earth; and by his sorceries all nations are deceived, (^{<310>}2 Thessalonians 2:10 ^{<634>}Revelation 13:14 18:23).

Ver. 6. *The words of the wicked [are] to lie in wait for blood,* etc.] Which some understand of perjury and false witness, as Jarchi, whereby the lives of innocent persons are taken away: or it may be interpreted either of the smooth words and fair speeches, and secret artifices, antichrist and his emissaries make use of to entrap the innocent, and draw them into their net, to their ruin; (see ^{<900>}Psalm 10:7-10); as the Jews attempted to deal with Christ, (^{<420>}Luke 20:20,21); or of the laws and edicts of the beast, that such should be killed who would not worship his image; and with the blood of these innocent ones the whore of Rome is said to be drunk, (^{<635>}Revelation 13:15 17:6);

but the mouth of the upright shall deliver them: the innocent laid in wait for; either by their prayers to God, which are of great avail with him, and through whose importunity he will avenge his elect, and deliver them; or through their apologies for them, and defences of them, as in the times of Pagan persecution; or rather through the doctrines of the reformation, whereby many simple and unwary souls were delivered, who were in danger of being ensnared; and whereby the eyes of many princes were opened, and were stirred up to protect those innocent ones, and prevent their blood being shed.

Ver. 7. *The wicked are overthrown, and [are] not,* etc.] With such an overthrow as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. The kingdom of the beast shall not only be full of darkness, as at the pouring of the fifth vial, and be in the utmost confusion, but it shall be brought to ruin and destruction; which stands opposed to “the house of the righteous”, in the next clause: the ten kings, the supporters of antichrist, shall be overcome by the Lamb, with whom they will make war; the beast, and the false prophet, shall be taken by him, and destroyed; and Babylon shall sink like a millstone into the sea, and be no more; the wicked shall be consumed out

of the earth; these Heathens shall be no more in the land; the man of sin shall never revive again;

but the house of the righteous shall stand; not his material dwelling house; nor the earthly house of his tabernacle, his body; nor his family, as the generality of interpreters, for the family of the righteous may be extinct, and especially not continue as righteous; but the church of God, as the gloss upon the text, the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth; the church which is built on the Rock, Christ; the mountain of the Lord's house, which shall be established upon the top of the mountains in the latter day, when the kingdom of antichrist shall be overthrown, and be no more. This is the same with the household of faith, and the household of God, and here called "the house of the righteous"; because they dwell in it, have a place and a name in it better than sons and daughters; and indeed none but they ought to be in it, that have on the wedding garment, the robe of Christ's righteousness; and who walk uprightly, and work righteousness. Now this house shall stand; its foundation, which is Christ, is sure, an everlasting one; its pillars are firm and stable, the ministers of the word, who will be to the end of the world; the ordinances of it will continue till Christ's second coming; the doctrines of it are the word of God, which standeth for ever, when all flesh is as grass. This house stands, notwithstanding all the persecutions of men; it has stood against all the fury of Rome, Pagan and Papal, and still will continue, notwithstanding the craft of false teachers to undermine it; and though it may sometimes be in a waste and ruinous condition seemingly, yet the Lord will raise it up again, and glorify this house of his glory, and make it beautiful and honourable: it shall stand, because it is the Lord's house, of his building, and where he delights to dwell in; because it is the house of Christ, which he, Wisdom, has built; and where he presides as a Son, as a Prophet, Priest, and King; and because it is the house where his people are born and brought up, and therefore shall continue till everyone are brought in; and because it is built on a rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, (⁴¹⁶⁸Matthew 16:18); compare with this (⁴¹⁷²Matthew 7:24,25).

Ver. 8. *A man shall be commended according to his wisdom*, etc.] Not according to his birth and pedigree; not according to his riches and wealth; not according to the places of honour and trust he may be in; but according to his wisdom, which he discovers in his words and actions, in his life and conversation: not according to the wisdom that is earthly, sensual, and devilish; not according to the wisdom of the world, which comes to

nought, either natural or civil; especially that which lies in sophistry and subtlety, in wicked craft and cunning, whereby men trick, overreach, and defraud one another; but according to that which is spiritual and evangelical; which lies in the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, and of those things which belong to salvation; the beginning of which is the fear of the Lord, and which comes from above, and is pure and peaceable. A man possessed of this is commended by all wise and good men, and by the Lord himself; as the wise man is by Christ, (^{<41724>}Matthew 7:24,25); who builds his house on a rock; for which reason it stands, as in the preceding verse;

but he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised; and which appears by the perverse words he speaks against God and Christ; against his people, ways, and worship, as antichrist and his followers do; and by his perverse actions, which are contrary to the light of nature, to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ: and such vile persons are contemned in the eyes of all good men, and are had in abhorrence by the Lord himself; for such who despise him are lightly esteemed; (see ^{<21833>}Proverbs 18:3).

Ver. 9. [*He that is*] *despised, and hath a servant*, etc.] Meaning not the same person as before, but one in mean circumstances of life; and because he has not that substance as others have, at least does not make that show and figure in the world as some; and mean in his own eyes, as Jarchi; and does not affect grandeur, and to look greater than he is; has just sufficiency to keep a servant to wait upon him; or, as some render it, is “a servant to himself”^{<f328>}; to this purpose the Septuagint; and so Jarchi and Gersom interpret it, who does his own work at home and abroad, in the house and in the field, and so gets himself a competent living. He

[*is*] *better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread*; that boasts of his pedigree, and brags of his wealth; dresses out in fine clothes, keeps a fine equipage, makes a great figure abroad, and has scarce bread to eat at home, and would have none if his debts were paid; the former is much the better man on all accounts, and more to be commended; (see ^{<21837>}Proverbs 13:7). And so, as Cocceius observes, the least shepherd (under Christ) that has ever so few sheep, one or two under his care, whom he brings to righteousness, and by whom he is loved, is preferable to the pope of Rome, who is adored by all; and yet neither has nor gives the bread of souls; and without the offerings of others has not anything to eat.

Ver. 10. *A righteous [man] regardeth the life of his beast*, etc.] Or “knoweth” it^{f329}; knows the worth of it and values it, and takes care of it, and is concerned for the preservation of it; he provides sufficient food for it, and gives it; he does not overwork it, but allows it proper rest from labour; and, if in any disorder, will make use of all suitable means to heal it; see an instance of the care of Jacob, that righteous man, of his cattle, (^{<0394>}Genesis 33:14); and, on the other hand, see an instance of a wicked man’s cruelty to his beast in Balaam, for which he was reprov’d, (^{<0228>}Numbers 22:28); by various laws and rules which God has given, it is his will that men should be merciful to their beasts, (^{<0274>}Deuteronomy 25:4 ^{<0210>}Exodus 20:10); and such who are so will be more especially pitiful and tenderhearted to their fellow creatures;

but the tender mercies of the wicked [are] cruel; or “[are] the mercies of a cruel one”^{f330}; the most tender things which are expressed or done by them are nothing but cruelty; and what then must be their more severe expressions and actions? so the most tender concern which antichrist and his followers show to the souls of men breathes nothing but cruelty; the compassionate methods they take to convert heretics, as they call them, are dark dungeons and stinking prisons, racks and tortures, fire and faggots; these are their wholesome severities; this their kindness to men, to deliver them up to the secular power, to inflict pains and punishments on them the most grievous to save their souls. Thus, while the beast of Rome looks like a lamb, he speaks like a dragon, and exercises all the cruelty of the first beast, Rome Pagan, (^{<631>}Revelation 13:11,12).

Ver. 11. *He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread*, etc.] This was man’s work in innocence; this he was doomed to do with the sweat of his brow after his fall; every man has his land to till, or some calling, work, or business, to be employed in, either civil or sacred; and it becomes him to be diligent therein, and such as are shall not want bread, but shall have a sufficiency of it;

but he that followeth vain [persons is] void of understanding: that neglects his business, loiters away his time, spends it in the company of vain, empty, and unprofitable persons; as he shows himself by such a choice that he is void of understanding, or “wants a heart”^{f331}, to improve his time and talents; so before long it is much if he does not want a piece of bread. Thus he that is concerned to have the fallow ground of his heart ploughed up, and righteousness, truth, and holiness, sown therein, that it may bring forth

fruit; or who is careful about the welfare and salvation of his immortal soul, and makes diligent use of all means to promote its spiritual good, shall be filled with the bread of life, shall find it and eat it, to the joy and rejoicing of his heart; and, on the contrary, he that associates himself with vain persons, empty of all that is spiritually good, that have only empty notions of religion; or who attend to the profane and vain boastings of antichrist, and all false teachers; and give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, whose words eat as do a canker; these, as they show themselves to want wisdom, so they are and will be brought into starving and famishing circumstances in a spiritual sense. Jarchi interprets the former clause of a man that is studious in his doctrine, that revolves it in his mind, that he may not forget it; and the Arabic version renders the last clause,

“they that run after false demons, their minds are deficient;”

(see ^{<600>}Revelation 9:20).

Ver. 12. *The wicked desireth the net of evil [men]*, etc.] To be master of all the wicked arts and methods evil men use to ensnare and oppress others; to get them and their substance into their hands; or “desireth the evil net”, as the Targum; the evil net of antichrist, which he lays for the poor, whom he draws into it and catches them; (see ^{<900>}Psalm 10:9). Jarchi understands it of “hunting”,^{f332} and of wicked men desiring to be fed and nourished with what evil men get by hunting; compare with this (^{<2300>}Ezekiel 13:18-21). Some render it the “fortress” or “strong hold”^{f333} of evil men, in which they fortify and secure themselves to do mischief to others, and to prevent any besieging them, so Gersom; and this is what all wicked men are desirous of;

but the root of the righteous yieldeth [fruit]; or “shall give”^{f334} that; that security and protection from real evil and mischief which the wicked cannot obtain; or he, that is, God, “shall give the righteous root”^{f335}, firmly fix them that they shall not be moved; or as we supply it, and so Aben Ezra, “yieldeth fruit”, much more desirable than the net of evil men the wicked covet: righteous men are compared to trees, they are called “trees of righteousness”, (^{<2300>}Isaiah 61:3); these have a root in the love of God, in the person of Christ, and in the grace of the Spirit, and this root yieldeth fruit; the love of God is the root and source of all good things, of all the blessings of grace, of the fruit of grace, faith, hope, and love, and of evangelical obedience; the person of Christ is the source of all spiritual blessings, of salvation and eternal life; the righteous have their being in him

as a root; they are bore by him, have all their life, grace, holiness, fruitfulness, and perseverance therein, from him; and the grace of the Spirit in the heart, which is the root of the matter, the hidden man of the heart, from hence are fruits meet for faith and repentance, and good works, which are both pleasant and profitable. The Targum is,

“the root of the righteous shall remain, or be established;”

(see ^{<1118>}Proverbs 12:3).

Ver. 13. *The wicked is snared by the transgression of [his] lips*, etc.] A wicked man often brings himself into trouble by giving his tongue too great a liberty, and by making free with the characters of others; sometimes by treasonable speeches against his sovereign; sometimes by bearing false Witness, and by lies and perjuries, of which he is convicted in open court; and by calumnies, reproaches, detraction, and scandal raised by him, and cast on his neighbour, who sues him for these things: or “in the transgression of the lips [is] an evil snare”; or “the snare of an evil man”^{<f336>}; by the wicked things they say they lay a snare for others, which the simple and incautious are taken in; so heretics ensnare men by their good words and fair speeches, and plausibility of their doctrines; so antichrist, by lies in hypocrisy, and by his deceivableness of unrighteousness;

but the just shall come out of trouble; or escape it; he escapes the snare that is laid for him, and so the trouble consequent upon it; a just man escapes trouble by not giving his tongue the liberty wicked men do; and when he by any means falls into trouble, he gets out of it again by giving good words to those in whose hands he is; and by his prayers and supplications unto God. The righteous are sometimes in trouble, and in such sort of trouble as others are not; by reason of their own corruptions, Satan’s temptations, the hidings of God’s face, as well as various outward afflictions; out of all which the Lord delivers them sooner or later, in life or in death, (^{<1249>}Psalm 34:19). Jarchi exemplifies this in the case of righteous Noah, who escaped the flood, when the world of the ungodly were destroyed by it, for the transgression of their lips, saying, as in (^{<1215>}Job 21:15), “what is the Almighty?” etc.

Ver. 14. *A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of [his] mouth*, etc.] The wholesome advice, the good instruction, and sound doctrine he delivers to others, which are the fruit of his lips, and come forth by them from his heart; these rebound to his own advantage, are not only a

satisfaction to his mind upon reflection, but because of these he is filled with good things, even to satiety, both in this life and that to come; (see ^{<4016>}1 Timothy 4:6); or a “man shall be satisfied with good from the fruit of the mouth”; or “be satisfied from the fruit of the mouth of a man”^{f337}; that is, of another man; either of a private man, by his prayers, by the account he gives of his own experience, by the conversation he has with him about the truths of the Gospel; or of a faithful minister of the word, who is the means of feeding the souls of men with good things, even to satisfaction, with the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, with the sincere milk of the word, with the bread of life, even with the finest of the wheat;

and the recompence of a man’s hand shall be rendered unto him; if his words turn to his account, much more his works; if he is filled with good things for the sake of the one, much more will he be recompensed in a way of grace on account of the other; and not for the one without the other, nor for words without works: or “the recompence of a man’s hands”, or of his works which his hands do, “he shall render to him”^{f338}; that is, God, who renders to every man according to his works; which serves not to establish the doctrine of merit, but to show the goodness and grace of God in taking notice of and accepting the imperfect works of men through Christ, and for his sake.

Ver. 15. *The way of a fool [is] right in his own eyes*, etc.] Whether it be the way of open profaneness, or self-righteousness, it appears to him to be the right way; it seems to him a very plain one, and he finds it pleasant; and, trusting to carnal sense, corrupt reason, and a false judgment, and having a high opinion of himself and his own knowledge, never asks after the right way, nor takes the advice of others;

but he that hearkeneth unto counsel [is] wise; that asks advice and takes it of such who are men of age and experience, men of longer standing, and are wiser than himself; who consults the word of God about the right way of walk, worship, and salvation, and makes the testimonies of God the men of his counsel, which are able to make him wise unto salvation; who hearkens to the counsel of Gospel ministers, and obeys it; and especially to Jesus Christ the wonderful Counsellor, and to the advice he gives, (^{<4018>}Revelation 3:18); and who not only hears his words, but does them; such an one is a wise man, (^{<4024>}Matthew 7:24,25).

Ver. 16. *A fool’s wrath is presently known*, etc.] Having no command of himself, he cannot repress it, nor keep it in; no sooner is he provoked but

he shows it in his countenance, and by his words and actions; it is to be seen in the fire of his eyes, in the frowns of his face, in the gnashing of his teeth, and in the stamping of his feet, as well as in the bitter expressions of his mouth: or “a fool’s wrath in that day is known”^{f339}; in the same day in which the provocation is given; yea, in the same hour, and in the same moment; he cannot defer showing it for the least space of time; or it is openly known, it is to be seen and observed by everyone: or thus, “a fool is presently known by his wrath”^{f340}; (see ^{<2009>}Ecclesiastes 7:9);

but a prudent [man] covereth shame; conceals his anger and resentment at any injury done him by words or actions, which if suffered to break out would bring shame and disgrace to him; or he covers the injury itself, the disgraceful words that are spoken of him, and the shameful actions done unto him; he puts up with the contempt that is cast upon him, and bears it patiently; takes no notice of the offence given him, and much less seeks revenge; in which he acts a prudent part, for by so doing he creates less trouble to himself, and gains more credit and reputation from others.

Ver. 17. [*He that*] *speaketh truth showeth forth righteousness*, etc.] He that “blows” or “breathes out truth”^{f341}, as the word signifies; that utters it freely and fully without any hesitation; that speaks nothing but truth, and speaks out the whole truth without any reserve; such a man upon every occasion will declare that which is just and right, and show himself to be an honest and upright man; he that uses himself to speak truth in common conversation, will, in a court of judicature, whether upon his oath or not, testify that which is just and the real matter of fact; there is a connection between truth and righteousness, for though they are distinct things they go together, what is true is just, and what is just is true; so he that speaks the truth of the Gospel, or is a faithful preacher of it, will show forth righteousness, what is the righteousness of the law, and what is the righteousness of faith; how insufficient a man’s own righteousness is to justify him in the sight of God; the necessity of the righteousness of Christ, how free and full, excellent and glorious, suitable and useful it is, (^{<8017>}Romans 1:17);

but a false witness deceit; that is, one that is used to lying, when he is called to give testimony upon any affair in judgment, he will declare that which is false and deceitful, having no regard to truth and justice. So a false teacher, instead of showing men the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and directing them to the righteousness of Christ for

justification, will utter deceitful doctrine, and build up their hopes upon the sandy and deceitful foundation of their own works; as Popish teachers, and such as verge towards them.

Ver. 18. *There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword*, etc.] Whose words are like sharp swords, cutting, wounding, dividing, killing; (see ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 57:4 59:7 64:3); such are the words of false witnesses, who by their false testimonies and perjuries are as guilty of the murder of men as cutthroats; such are the words of slanderers, backbiters, and talebearers, who grieve the innocent, wound their characters, destroy their good name and credit, and separate chief friends; and such are the words of antichrist, who looks like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon, (~~Revelation~~ Revelation 13:11);

but the tongue of the wise [is] health; or “healing”^{f342}; by giving a faithful testimony which sets matters right; by clearing and defending the character of those who are falsely accused and wrongfully charged; by making up differences, and reconciling persons at variance through the detracting and lying insinuations of others; and by speaking comfortable, cheerful, and refreshing words to the injured and abused; especially the tongue of a wise minister of the Gospel is health, or healing, to wounded souls, to whom he ministers the Gospel of the grace of God, which directs to Christ for healing, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life.

Ver. 19. *The lip of truth shall be established for ever*, etc.] The man that speaks truth is and will be established in his credit and reputation among men; he is uniform and all of a piece, and what he says is believed; truth, though it may be opposed, will prevail against lies and falsehood; the word of truth, the Gospel of Christ, will stand for ever; the ministers of truth and righteousness will be continued to the end of the world; Christ, who is truth itself, abides the same to day, yesterday, and for ever;

but a lying tongue [is] but for a moment; if a liar speaks truth for once, he does not continue in it long, but quickly returns to his former course; or rather the lie he tells is very short lived, it is soon discovered, and he comes into contempt and disgrace, and loses all his credit and reputation among men of honour and honesty, and is sometimes suddenly snatched away by death, as Ananias and Sapphira; all error and heresy in a short time will cease and be no more; and antichrist, whose coming is with lying wonders, the direct opposite of the lip of truth, will be brought to ruin in a moment. Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, who are followed by some Christian interpreters, as Montanus, and some in Vatablus, render it, “but”, or “for

ever, I will cause the lying tongue to cease”, or “be at rest” from speaking; as if they were the words of God, threatening to cut off the lying tongue; but Jarchi and Gersom render it “for a moment”, or a very short time, as we and others do; or, “whilst one winks”,^{f343} in the twinkling of an eye; so soon is such a person removed.

Ver. 20. *Deceit [is] in the heart of them that imagine evil*, etc.] That secretly devise mischief in their hearts against their neighbours; that plough evil, as the word^{f344} signifies, and sow discord among men; and by many artful and deceitful methods promote contention and division, in order to answer some base designs of theirs; but sooner or later they are deceived themselves, are disappointed of their views, the consequence of which is vexation and sorrow;

but to the counsellors of peace [is] joy: such who consult the good of others, who advise to peace, concord, and unity; who seek to cultivate it in their families and neighbourhoods, and in the church of God, in which, if they succeed, they have joy and pleasure; if not, they have a satisfaction, in their own minds and consciences that they have done what is right and good; such have a conscience peace now, and an eternal one hereafter; or, as Aben Ezra calls it, the joy of salvation; (see ^{<118>}Matthew 5:9).

Ver. 21. *There shall no evil happen to the just*, etc.] The evil of sin: no iniquity, as the Targum; which, and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, interpret of sin not being agreeable, convenient, suit able, and pleasing to a righteous man. Moreover, the Lord, by his Spirit and grace, weakens the power of sin in them; and, by his providence, prevents and removes occasion of sinning; and by his power preserves from it, from being overcome and carried away with it, at least finally and totally. Or the evil of punishment is here meant; no penal evil shall befall them; the punishment of their sin has been inflicted on Christ their surety, and therefore shall never be laid on them; and whatever afflictions may happen to them, which have the name and appearance of evil, these work together for their good, spiritual and eternal; so that, in reality, no evil thing, properly speaking, happens to them; (see ^{<910>}Psalms 91:10). Or whatever does come to them comes not by chance unto them, but by the decree and will of God, and is overruled for good;

but the wicked shall be filled with mischief; or “with evil”^{f345}, the evil of sin; with malice and wickedness, with all impiety and unrighteousness, with ignorance and error; with all kind of sins, both against the first and second

table of the law, and so with all the consequences of sin: with the evil of punishment; with an evil conscience, with the terrors of it; with many distresses here, and with everlasting destruction hereafter. Some understand it of the mischief they devise to others, which they are full of and big with; and “though” they are, as Aben Ezra interprets the word, yet no evil shall happen to the righteous; the mischief contrived by them shall fall upon themselves.

Ver. 22. *Lying lips [are] abomination to the Lord*, etc.] Such that speak lies in common talk; and that deliver out doctrinal lies, false doctrines, lies in hypocrisy, as are the doctrines of Rome; these are abominable unto God; as being contrary to his nature as the God of truth; contrary to the Scriptures of truth he has endited; contrary to the truth of the Gospel he has published; contrary to his Son, who is truth itself; and to the Spirit of truth, which leads into all truth, as it is in Jesus; wherefore an abomination and a lie are joined together, (~~627~~ Revelation 21:27);

but they that deal truly [are] his delight; or the objects of “his good will” and pleasure, as the word ^{f346} signifies; they are grateful and acceptable to him; he is well-pleased with them, and delights in them. Not only such that speak the truth, but “do the truth”^{f347}, as the words may be rendered; whose words and actions, doctrine and life, agree together: it is not enough to embrace, profess, or preach the truth, but he must practise it; (see ~~821~~ John 3:21 ~~606~~ 1 John 1:6); he must deal truly with God and men, or faithfully, as the Targum and Vulgate Latin version; he must be true to his word and promises, and faithfully perform what he has agreed unto. Or, “that work faith”; that work the work of faith, that faith which works by love; that live on Christ and his righteousness; such are well pleasing to God; without which faith it is impossible to please him, (~~816~~ Hebrews 11:6).

Ver. 23. *A prudent man concealeth knowledge*, etc.] Of things natural or divine, which he is furnished with; not but that he is willing to communicate it, as he should, at proper times, in proper places, and to proper persons; but he does not needlessly and unseasonably speak of it; he does not make a show of it, or boast and brag of it: he modestly forbears to speak of what he knows, but when there is a necessity for it, even of that which may be lawfully divulged; which is a point of prudence and modesty; otherwise it is criminal to reveal secrets, or publish what should be kept private or should not be known. Aben Ezra interprets it of a wise man’s hiding his knowledge in his heart, that he may not forget it;

but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness; that which they have in their hearts and minds, and which they take for deep knowledge, profound and recondite learning, they proclaim with their mouths in a noisy and clamorous way; and while they declare their ill shaped notions, their incoherent and unconnected ideas of things, they betray their ignorance and folly, as ostentatious men do.

Ver. 24. *The hand of the diligent shall bear rule*, etc.] “Shall become rich”, so Jarchi interprets it, according to (¹⁰⁰⁶Proverbs 10:4); Through diligence men get riches, and through riches they arrive to power and authority over others: from apprentices and journeymen workmen they become masters of their business; diligent men become masters of families, and have servants and workmen under them; become magistrates in cities, and bear rule over their fellow citizens, and are advanced to places of power and authority in the commonwealth; (see ¹⁰²⁹Proverbs 22:29);

but the slothful shall be under tribute; the “slothful” or “deceitful hand”^{f348}, for so it may be rendered and supplied; for usually such who are slothful, and do not care for business, get their living by deceitful methods, by tricking and sharpening; and such become subject to others, to them that are diligent; hence said to be “under tribute”, or tributary; because those that are tributary are in subjection to those to whom they pay tribute.

Ver. 25. *Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop*, etc.] Either an anxious care and solicitude about living in the world, as the word^{f349} signifies; when it seizes a man’s spirits, it depresses them, and keeps them down: or a fear and dread of adversity, or sorrow and grief, on account of some calamity and distress; when it gets into a man’s heart, it sinks and bows it down, that it cannot take any pleasure or comfort in anything. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, a “terrible word troubles the heart of a just man”; or “troubles the heart of man”, as the Syriac version; the Targum is,

“a word of fear in the heart of man causes fear:”

such is the law, which is a word of terror; which speaks terrible things to men; fills the mind with terror; works wrath in the conscience, and induces a spirit of bondage to fear; bows and keeps under the spirits of men, through a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation;

but a good word maketh it glad; a comforting, cheering, and encouraging word from any friend, that compassionates their distressed case; this lifts

up the heart and inspires it with joy; so a word in season, spoken by a Gospel minister, raises up a soul that is bowed down, and gives it comfort and joy: such a good word is the Gospel itself; it is good news from a far country, which is like cold water to a thirsty soul, very refreshing and reviving. The Septuagint and Arabic versions here render it, “a good message”, and such the Gospel is; which, when brought to the heart of a poor sinner, depressed with the terrors of the law, causes joy in it; such is the word of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by Christ; such is the word that he himself spoke, (⁴⁰⁹²Matthew 9:2). Kimchi instances in (⁴⁰⁷²Psalms 55:22).

Ver. 26. *The righteous [is] more excellent than his neighbour*, etc.] Not than his neighbour who is righteous also; for though one may have more excellent gifts than another, or a larger measure of grace; one righteous man may have more faith than another, yet not more righteousness; every truly righteous man is justified by the same righteousness, even the righteousness of Christ; and therefore one cannot be more excellent, considered as righteous: but the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, who is ungodly and unrighteous, or however who has no other righteousness than his own; though his neighbour may be of more noble birth, and have even the title of “his excellency” given him; though he may have a larger share of wealth and riches; and though he may have attained a greater degree of natural wisdom and understanding, be a man of brighter parts, and of a larger capacity; yet, being righteous, he is more excellent than he: his superior excellency lies in his righteousness, from whence he is denominated; the righteousness of Christ, imputed to him, is far better than the best righteousness of his neighbour; it being the righteousness of God, his is the righteousness of a creature; a perfect righteousness, whereas his is imperfect; a splendid and glorious one, his filthy rags; a very extensive one, by which all the seed of Israel are justified, his such as not one individual person can be justified by it; an everlasting one, that will answer for him that has it in a time to come, his like the morning cloud and early dew that passes away; yea, the inherent righteousness of a righteous man, or the grace of Christ, imparted to him and implanted in him, that principle of holiness in him is greatly better than the righteousness of his neighbour a Pharisee; for this is true and real holiness, truth in the inward part, whereas the other’s is only a shadow of holiness, a form of godliness without the power; this has the Spirit of God for its author, it is his workmanship, and a curious piece it is, whereas the other is only the produce of nature; this

makes a man all glorious within, and gives him a meetness for heaven, whereas, notwithstanding the other, the man is inwardly full of all manner of iniquity, and has neither a right nor meetness for eternal glory. Nay, the external works of righteousness done by a truly righteous man are preferable to his neighbour's, destitute of the grace of God; the one being a course of obedience to the will of God, and a respect to all his commandments; when the other consists only of a little negative holiness, and of an observance of a few rituals of religion: the one spring from a heart purified by the blood of Christ, and the grace of the Spirit, and from principles of grace and love, and are done to the glory of God; whereas the other do not arise from a pure heart, and faith unfeigned; nor are they done sincerely, with a view to the glory of God: only to be seen of men, and gain credit and reputation among them; and in these respects the righteous man is more excellent as such than his neighbour, who at most and best is only externally and morally righteous: his superior excellency does not lie in nature, in which they are both alike; nor in outward circumstances, in which they may differ; nor in the opinion of men, with whom the saints are the offscouring of all things; but in the, esteem of Christ, and through his grace and righteousness; (see ^{494B} Psalm 16:3); Some render the words, "the righteous explores [his way] more than his neighbour"^{f350}; seeks and finds out a better way than he does; and is careful that he is not seduced and carried out of the way, and perish;

but the way of the wicked seduceth them; or causes them to err; it deceives, by promising the honour, pleasure, and profit, which it does not lead unto and give, and which they find not in it; and hereby they are led to wander from the way of the righteous, by which they attain a superior excellency to them.

Ver. 27. *The slothful [man] roasteth not that which he took in hunting,* etc.] Because he takes none. The slothful man takes no pains to get anything for a livelihood, by hunting or otherwise; and though he loves to live well, and eat roast meat, yet what he roasts is not what he has got himself, but what another has laboured for. It is observed^{f351} that fowlers burn the wings of birds taken by them, that they may not fly away; to which the allusion may be. Or, "the deceitful"^{f352} man, as it may be rendered; though he may get much in a fraudulent way, yet it does not prosper with him, he does not enjoy it; it is taken away from him before he can partake of it, or receive any comfort from it, or advantage by it; just as a man that has took anything in hunting, he cannot keep it; it is taken away

from him, perhaps by a dog or some man, before he can roast it, and make it fit for eating. Ben Melech, from Joseph Kimchi, observes, that fowlers, when they catch fowls, burn the top of their wings, that they may not fly away at once; and they do not cut their wings off, that they may be left, and appear beautiful to them that buy them: but the slothful or deceitful man does not let the fowl remain in his hands till he burns it; for before that it flies out of his hands, and it is lost to him; which is figuratively to be understood of riches and wealth, gathered by violence and deceit, and lost suddenly. What is ill gotten does not spend well; it does not last long, it is presently gone; there is no true enjoyment of it. Or he will not shut it up within lattices^{f353} and reserve it, but spend it directly; (see ²¹¹¹Song of Solomon 2:9);

but the substance of a diligent man [is] precious; what is gotten by industry and diligence, and in an honest way, is valuable; it comes with a blessing; there is comfort in the enjoyment of it, and it continues. Some render it, “the substance of a precious man [is] gold”^{f354}; so the Targum,

“the substance of a man is precious gold;”

and to the same purpose the Vulgate Latin version: a diligent man grows rich; and what he gets spends well, and his substance is daily increasing.

Ver. 28. *In the way of righteousness [is] life*, etc.] The life of the soul, or spiritual life, as Aben Ezra; and eternal life, as Gersom. One that is in the true way of righteousness is one that is instilled by the righteousness of Christ, which justification is the justification of life: such an one is made alive, and reckons himself alive in a law sense; and enjoys true spiritual peace and comfort, arising from the love and favour of God, and acceptance with him, in which he sees his interest, and in which is life; and this righteousness, by which he is justified before God, entitles him to eternal life; to which the path of holiness, he is directed and enabled to walk in, leads; though it is a narrow way, and a strait gate, (⁴¹⁷⁴Matthew 7:14). Christ, and righteousness and holiness in and by him, are the way, the truth, and the life, or the true way to eternal life; and all in this way now live spiritually, and shall live eternally, (⁴¹⁴⁶John 14:6);

and [in] the pathway [thereof there is] no death; no condemnation to them that are in Christ, the way, and are justified by his righteousness; the law’s sentence of death shall not be executed on them, though it passed upon them in Adam; spiritual death shall not again prevail over those who are

passed from death to life; nor shall they be hurt at the second death; they shall never die that death, it shall have no power over them; life and immortality are the sure effects of being in the way of righteousness. The Targum renders it, “the way of the perverse”: and the Septuagint version, “of those that remember evil”: and the Syriac and Arabic versions, “the way of angry men is unto death”: and so the Vulgate Latin version,

“the out of the way path leads to death:”

and so some Hebrew copies read, instead of “no death, unto death”; but the most read as we do, and which the Jewish commentators follow.

CHAPTER 13

Ver. 1. *A wise son [heareth] his father's instruction*, etc.] As he should, and has good reason to do; since it must be cordial, faithful, and disinterested, as well as the effect of age and experience. He “asks for it” and “loves” it, as Jarchi supplies the text; he likes and approves of it, is well pleased with it, and delights in it; seeing it tends to his profit and advantage; he “receives” it, as the Targum, so Ben Melech; he listens to and obeys it, and acts agreeably to it, which shows him to be wise; and this is the way to be wiser and wiser. So one that is spiritually wise will attend to and receive the instruction of Wisdom or Christ; who stands in the relation of an everlasting fin, her to his children; whose instruction is the doctrine of the Gospel; which a wise man hears, so as to understand it; to love and like it, and approve of it; cordially to embrace and obey it, and put it in practice; (see ^{<4074>}Matthew 7:24). The word also signifies “correction”^{f355}, because instruction often comes by it; and he that is a wise man will hear the rod and him that has appointed it, and learn to know his mind by it, and receive instruction from it: or is “chastised by his father”^{f356}, and takes it well, (^{<3189>}Micah 6:9);

but a scorner heareth not rebuke; that is, a son who is a scorner, as the Targum and Aben Ezra; one that makes a mock at sin, and scoffs at religion: such a man will be so far from hearing, attending to, and receiving the rebuke and reproof of his father, that he will scoff also at that; such as were the sons in law of Lot, and the sons of Eli and Samuel. So scornful men, that make a jest of everything that is sacred, will not hearken to the reproof of God's word, to the rebukes of Gospel ministers, or even to the rebukes of Providence, which will issue in their destruction, (^{<3151>}Proverbs 5:11, 12).

Ver. 2. *A man shall eat good by the fruit of [his] mouth*, etc.] Or, “of the mouth”; either another's or his own, since the word his is not in the text; though it is supplied by the Targum, Aben Ezra, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, as by us. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “shall eat of the fruits of righteousness”. I should choose to translate the whole thus: “a good man shall eat of the fruit of his mouth”: so Aben Ezra interprets it, “a good man shall eat”; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it. The sense is, that a good man brings forth good

things out of the good treasure of his heart by his mouth; which not only minister grace to the hearers, and are for the use of edifying to others, but also to himself; while he gives wholesome counsel and advice to others, it is of service to himself; while he comforts others, he comforts himself; and while he teaches and instructs others, he teaches and instructs himself: so a good minister of Jesus Christ, while he feeds others with knowledge and understanding, he himself is nourished up with the words of faith and good doctrine; so Jarchi refers it to a man's doctrine, and the reward of it here and hereafter;

but the soul of the transgressors [shall eat] violence; Jarchi interprets it, “the delight of transgressors is violence;”^{f357}

that is, what their souls desire, choose, will, and take pleasure in, even using violence, and doing mischief to others; and to the same purpose is the note of Gersom: but Aben Ezra supplies it from the former clause, as we do; and the sense is, that the same measure they mete out to others shall be measured out to them again; what they give others to eat, they shall eat themselves, even the bread of violence; (see ^{<1046>}Proverbs 4:16 10:6). And this will be the case of all perfidious and treacherous ones, as the word^{f358} used signifies; of false teachers and cruel persecutors; and of Babylon, of whom it will he said, “reward her as she rewarded you”, (^{<6816>}Revelation 18:6).

Ver. 3. *He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life,* etc.] He that keeps his mouth shut keeps it as with a bridle; keeps it from speaking things of other persons, particularly of such as are in high places, of kings and princes, and civil magistrates: he keeps himself quiet and comfortable; keeps himself from many troubles, which otherwise he would come into; keeps his life from danger, to which it would be exposed, should he speak evil of dignities, or give himself the freedom, as some do, whereby they are brought to an untimely end; (see ^{<10821>}Proverbs 18:21); besides, persons ought to be careful of their words, since by them a man will either be justified or condemned hereafter, (^{<10237>}Matthew 12:37);

[but] he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction; or “consternation”^{f359}: he that is rash and inconsiderate, hasty with his lips, a talkative man; that speaks freely everything that comes into his mind, regardless of the characters of men, or consequences of things; is often brought into frights and fears, through the menaces and threatenings of

men in power, whose characters he has made too free with, and oftentimes is brought to ruin and destruction: so he, whose throat is as an open sepulchre, belching out filthy words, horrid oaths, curses, and imprecations, destruction is near him, even in all his ways; and the man of sin, that opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, and his tabernacle, and his saints, shall go into perdition, (^{<613>}Revelation 13:5,6 17:8).

Ver. 4. *The soul of the sluggard desireth, and [hath] nothing*, etc.] He desires knowledge, but does not care to be at any pains to get it, and so has it not; he desires riches, but chooses not to make use of the means, to be diligent and industrious, and so he is without them; he desires to wear good clothes and rich raiment, but is unwilling to labour for them, and therefore is clothed with rags; he desires food, and plenty of it, but refuses to work for it; and he that will not work should not eat, and therefore he has it not, but starves and famishes: and, in spiritual things, the sluggard desires heaven and happiness, but does not care to do the duties of religion; he would die the death of the righteous, but is unwilling to live his life; to abstain from sin, and live soberly and righteously, is too hard service for him; he does not choose to do or suffer anything for the cause of Christ and true religion. Jarchi's note is, that

“in the future state he shall see the glory of the wise man, and desire it; but shall not attain to it;”

but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat; become rich; increase in temporal things, and have great plenty and prosperity; and so, in spiritual matters, such who are diligent in the use of means, constantly attend on the word and ordinances, and labour for the meat which endures to everlasting life; such are filled and satisfied, as with marrow and fatness; and become fat and flourishing, and fruitful in every good word and work; and shall at last arrive to that state where there will be no more hunger and thirst.

Ver. 5. *A righteous [man] hateth lying*, etc.] Or, “a word of falsehood”^{f360}; as being contrary to honour, truth, and conscience. He hates it in himself and others; he hates all sorts of lies, lies in common conversation, religious lies, doctrinal ones, false doctrines, lies spoken in hypocrisy; such as the followers of antichrist spread, being given up unto them that they might be damned, (^{<500>}1 Timothy 4:2 ^{<511>}2 Thessalonians 2:11,12); these are an abomination to God and all good men, (^{<617>}Revelation 21:27);

but a wicked [man] is loathsome, and cometh to shame; or, “causes” or “spreads a stink”^{f361}: all wicked men are loathsome and abominable, being very corrupt in principle and practice; all over defiled with sin, and covered with wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet; and especially liars, who are often brought to shame and confusion in this life, and will hereafter come to everlasting shame and contempt. Or, “makes himself to stink”^{f362}; in the nostrils of all good men, and so brought to shame: or “digs”; a metaphor, as Cartwright thinks, from those that dig in the earth, where such as are covered with shame would gladly put their heads.

Ver. 6. *Righteousness keepeth [him that is] upright in the way*, etc.] Men of uprightness and integrity, whose hearts are sincere in the ways of God; the principle of grace and righteousness in them keeps them in those ways, and will not suffer them to turn aside into crooked paths; the word of righteousness, the doctrine of the Gospel, is a means of preserving them from sin, and of keeping them in the right way; particularly the doctrine of Christ’s righteousness, and justification by it, is a great antidote against sin, and a powerful motive and incentive to the performance of good works, and all the duties of religion: it engages men to observe every command of Christ, to walk in all his ways; and is a great preservative from false doctrine and antichristian worship;

but wickedness overthroweth the sinner; it is the cause of his utter overthrow, of his being punished with everlasting destruction. It is, in the Hebrew text, “sin”^{f363} itself; the sinner is so called, because he is perfectly wicked, as Jarchi observes; he is nothing but sin, a mere mass of sin and corruption. Aben Ezra renders it, “the man of sin”; and it may be well applied to him, who is emphatically called so, and is likewise the son of perdition; who, for his wickedness, will be overthrown and destroyed at the coming of Christ, and with the brightness of it, (~~3~~2 Thessalonians 2:3,8).

Ver. 7. *There is that maketh himself rich, yet [hath] nothing*, etc.] Some persons make a great show of riches, and would be thought to be rich; put on fine clothes, live at a high rate, and appear in great pomp, and yet not worth a farthing; which they do to gratify their pride and ambition, and to draw in others to trust them with their substance. So in spirituals; some persons, as hypocrites, would be thought to be rich in grace, and to be possessed of all the graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love; and yet have nothing of true grace, only what is counterfeit; the root of the matter is not

in them; no principle of life and grace, only a name to live; nothing of the power, only the form, of godliness; no oil of grace in the vessels of their hearts, only the lamp of an outward profession: some, as the Pharisees, would be thought to be rich in good works, when they have no good thing in them, and do nothing that is spiritually good; either what they do is not done according to the revealed will of God, as many things done by the Pharisees formerly, and by the Papists now, or they do not flow from love; nor are they done in faith, nor in the name and strength of Christ, nor to the glory of God by him: some, as the same persons, would be thought to be rich in righteousness, when they have no true righteousness at all; not the righteousness of the law, which requires perfection of obedience; not the righteousness of faith, which is the righteousness of another; the righteousness of God is imputed, and is without the works of men; they have no righteousness that can justify them, or save them, or bring them to heaven: some, as the Arminians, would be thought to be rich in spiritual strength, and in the power of their free will, when they have neither will nor power to do anything spiritually good; neither to regenerate and convert themselves, nor to come to Christ, nor to do any good work: some, as the Perfectionists, would be thought to be so rich as to be free from sin, and perfect in grace, when they have none at all, as says the apostle, (¹⁰⁰⁸1 John 1:8); their picture is drawn in Ephraim, and their language spoke by him, (²⁸¹⁸Hosea 12:8). The apostate church of Rome would be thought rich with the merits of saints, and works of supererogation, when she has no merit at all; nor is it possible for a creature to, merit anything at the hands of God; compare with all this (⁶⁸¹⁷Revelation 3:17);

[there is] that maketh himself poor, yet [hath] great riches; there are some, on the other hand, who greatly degrade themselves; live in a very mean way, as though they were very poor; either through covetousness, or because they would not draw upon them the envy of their neighbours, or encourage their friends to borrow of them, or invite thieves to steal from them, or for some low end or another: the pope of Rome sometimes affects to seem poor, though at other times, and in other respects, he would be thought rich; at the Lateran procession the newly elected pope scatters pieces of brass money among the people, saying, as Peter, whose successor he pretends to be, did, “Silver and gold have I none”, (⁴⁴⁸⁶Acts 3:6); yet comes into great riches. These words may be applied spiritually, in a good sense; there are some who are sensible of their spiritual poverty, and own

it; they ingenuously express the sense they have of their own nothingness and unworthiness; they declare they have nothing, and can do nothing; they renounce all their own works in the business of salvation, and ascribe it wholly to the grace of God; they have very mean thoughts, and speak very meanly of themselves, as less than the least of saints, and the chief of sinners: yea, some carry the matter too far in the expressions of their poverty; will not be persuaded that they have the true riches of grace, at least will not own it; but give way to their doubts and fears about it, when they are possessed of much; to whom some think these words are applicable. However, they are to such who are “poor in spirit”, (^(418B)Matthew 5:3), as before described; who have, notwithstanding, “great riches”, the riches of justifying grace, the riches of Christ’s righteousness: the riches of pardoning grace, a large share thereof, much being forgiven them; the riches of sanctifying grace, faith, more precious than that of gold that perisheth, with all other graces; the riches of spiritual knowledge, preferable to gold and silver: they have Christ, and all things along with him; they have God to be their portion, and exceeding great reward; they have a large estate, an incorruptible inheritance, in heaven; they have a better and a more enduring substance there; “theirs is the kingdom of heaven”, (^(408B)Matthew 5:3); it is prepared for them, and given to them; compare with this (^(410B)2 Corinthians 6:10).

Ver. 8. *The ransom of a man’s life [are] his riches*, etc.] As Benhadad’s were to him, when he was in the hands of the king of Israel, (^(412B)1 Kings 20:34); and as the treasures the ten men had in the field were to them, for the sake of which Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, slew them not, (^(240B)Jeremiah 41:8). This is the advantage of riches when a man is taken captive in war, or by pirates, or is in the hands of thieves and robbers, he can redeem himself by his money; or when his life is in danger by diseases, he can procure healing medicines; or by famine, he can get food to preserve it, when a poor man cannot: but this is not to be done always, and is only to be understood of a temporal life; for, as to the spiritual and eternal redemption of the soul of man, that requires a greater ransom price than such corruptible things as silver and gold; nothing short of the precious blood of Christ is sufficient for that, (^(433B)Job 36:18 ^(440B)Psalms 49:6-8 ^(401B)1 Peter 1:18,19). Moreover, these words may not so much design the convenience as the inconvenience of riches to men; since these often invite thieves to assault their persons, and break into their houses, and threaten their lives; and put wicked men upon forming schemes, and

drawing up charges and accusations against them, purely to get their money; which bring their lives into danger, and which they can only redeem by their riches;

but the poor heareth not rebuke; no charge and accusation is brought against him; no rebuke or reproof is given him; no notice is taken of him, because nothing is to be got from him; he may sleep with his door unlocked, thieves will give him no disturbance; he may travel upon the road without being bid to stand^{f364}. Jarchi interprets this of him that is poor in the law; that hearkens not to reproofs and admonitions, given him to depart from evil: but rather it may be applied to the poor in spirit; who trust not in themselves and their own righteousness, but in the grace of God and righteousness of Christ; who indeed hear the rebukes of good men, and take them kindly; and of bad men, and return not revilings for them; and also the rebukes of Providence, or the chastisements of their heavenly Father, yet they will never hear any rebuke in wrath from him here or hereafter; when the rich in their own conceit, who trust in their riches and righteousness, and think to ransom their souls from death by them, will have rebukes with flames of fire.

Ver. 9. *The light of the righteous rejoiceth*, etc.] The light of joy and gladness, which is sown for them, and arises to them; the light of spiritual knowledge and experience they have; the light of sound doctrine; the light of good works, and a Gospel conversation; all this, as it is delightful to themselves and others, so it is increasing more and more to the perfect day, and it continues: so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, “light [is] always for the righteous”; especially it will be in the latter day, and particularly in the New Jerusalem state, when there will be no night, (⁶⁶²³Revelation 21:23-25);

but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out; the light of the righteous is like that of the sun, bright and pleasant; but the light of the wicked is like that of a lamp, lesser and not so agreeable, nor will it last; their prosperity is short lived, their joy is but for a moment; the pleasures of sin are but for a season; their candle soon goes out; it is put out in obscure darkness, and they themselves are reserved to blackness of darkness, (¹⁸¹⁸Job 18:5,6 20:5 ³¹¹¹Proverbs 20:20); as prosperous and flourishing as the kingdom of antichrist has been or is, it will be full of darkness, (⁶⁶¹²Revelation 16:12).

Ver. 10. *Only by pride cometh contention*, etc.] Though it comes by other things, yet by this chiefly, and there are no contentions without it: or

“truly”, “verily”, “certainly”^{f365}, by pride”, etc. Unless the words may be better rendered, “an empty man through pride will give contention”^{f366}, or make it; such as are empty of knowledge and wisdom; and such are generally the most proud, and are very apt to raise contentions, and foment divisions: contentions in families, in neighbourhoods, in towns, cities, and countries, and in churches, are generally owing to pride; what contentions and confusions has the pride of the pope of Rome brought into kingdoms and states, into councils, and into the church of God!

but with the well advised [is] wisdom: such who are humble and modest will seek counsel of God; will consult the sacred oracles, and ask advice of those who are superior to them in knowledge and understanding; and so will neither raise contentions themselves, nor join with those that make them, but do all they can to lay them; these show that true wisdom is with them.

Ver. 11. *Wealth [gotten] by vanity shall be diminished,* etc.] In an unjust or unlawful way, either by robbery and theft, as Aben Ezra; or by fraud and tricking, by overreaching and circumventing others; or by vain practices, as by cards or dice, and by stage playing and the like; or by curious and illicit arts, as necromancy, judiciary astrology, and such like things; whatever is gotten in a wicked way very seldom lasts long; it lessens by little and little till it comes to nothing^{f367}; see (^{<2471>}Jeremiah 17:11); and sometimes very quickly and suddenly, all at once; thus that mass of riches which the church of Rome has got together by her vain and wicked practices, by her idolatry, pardons, and indulgences, will in one hour come to nought, (^{<6087>}Revelation 18:17);

but he that gathereth by labour shall increase, or “that gathereth by the hand” or “in [it]”^{f368}; by hand labour in an honest way, or with the diligent hand, which maketh rich; who labours with his hand and gets by in sufficient to support himself and his family, and to give to the necessities of others; who does not lay it up in coffers, but keeps it in his hand to distribute; such generally thrive and flourish: some copies read it, “he that gathereth, d[], unto the hand”^{f369}, that gathers and puts it into the hands of others; that liberally communicates to the poor; he shall increase, as commonly liberal persons do; so the Targum,

“he that gathereth and giveth to the poor shall increase in substance.”

Ver. 12. *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick*, etc.] That is, the object hoped for; if it is not enjoyed so soon as expected, at least if it is delayed any length of time, the mind becomes uneasy, the heart sinks and fails, and the man is dispirited and ready to despond, and give up all hope of enjoying the desired blessing; whether it be deliverance from any evil, or the possession of any good;

but [when] the desire cometh, [it is] a tree of life; when that which is hoped and wished for, and has been long expected and desired, comes; when there is an accomplishment of men's wishes, it is as grateful to him as the tree of life was in Eden's garden; it gives him an unspeakable pleasure and delight. This may be applied to many things in a spiritual way, as to the first coming of Christ; and some have thought this is greatly regarded and chiefly intended; this was the object of the hope of Old Testament saints; and it was hoped for on a good foundation, on the promise of God, which was frequently repeated, enlarged, and confirmed; yet this promised and hoped for blessing was deferred a long time; from the first promise of it to its accomplishment were four thousand years; though not deferred longer than the appointed time, yet longer than the saints expected, and which sometimes made their hearts sick; they became weak and feeble, fearful and dispirited, lest it should never come to pass, which occasioned fresh promises and assurances to them; (see ^{<288B>}Isaiah 35:3,4 ^{<388B>}Habakkuk 2:3) (^{<388B>}Malachi 3:1); but when "the desire" came, Christ the desired object; and who is desirable for the excellencies of his person, his mediatorial qualifications, the work of redemption and salvation he came about, and the blessings he brought with him; and who is the "desire of all nations" that was to come, (^{<388B>}Haggai 2:7); it was exceeding joyful and delightful to all that expected him, and were looking for redemption in Israel, or Christ; "the coming desire"^{f370}, as it may be rendered, is "a tree of life", or "lives", the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; (see ^{<388B>}Proverbs 3:18). It may be applied also to the spiritual presence of Christ, and communion with him; this is what believers, being sometimes without, hope and wait for; and sometimes it is deferred a long time, at least they think it so, which makes them very uneasy, and even sick of love, as the church was, (^{<288B>}Song of Solomon 5:8); but when what they so earnestly desire is granted them, it is as if they were in Eden's garden, or rather in the paradise above, plucking the fruit of the tree of life: likewise it may be applied to eternal glory and happiness; this is the object of hope in the present state; it is sometimes impatiently expected and desired, and the

language of the soul is, “Why is his chariot so long in coming?” , “come, Lord Jesus, come quickly”, (~~(UKB)~~Judges 5:28 ~~(f22)~~Revelation 22:20); and when this desired happiness is enjoyed, how sweet will it be! and the sweeter for having been so much longed and wished for; and when the saints will be in the paradise of God, and eat of the tree of life in the midst of it, and never hunger more.

Ver. 13. *Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed*, etc.] The word of God. Either Christ, the essential Word; which must be a great evil, considering the dignity of his person; great ingratitude, considering the grace of his office; very dangerous, considering what a quick, sharp, and powerful Word he is: and such may be said to despise him who despise his ministers, and the Gospel preached by them; and which may be meant by the word, that being the word of God and of truth, the word of righteousness, peace, life, and salvation; and is to them that perish foolishness; and to whom it is so, they shall perish, and be punished with everlasting destruction, for their contempt of it, and disobedience to it. Or the written word may be meant, the Scriptures, which are given by inspiration of God, and therefore ought to be had in the greatest reverence; and yet are greatly slighted and despised by the man of sin and his followers; who set up and prefer their unwritten traditions to them, and so make them of none effect: such are all false teachers, that despise or abuse them, they bring destruction to themselves; for so the words may be rendered, “shall bring destruction to himself”, or shall receive detriment from it: so the Targum, from the word itself; the Syriac version, “by it”; and the Arabic version, “by the commandment itself”; by the threatenings in it, and according to them: or, “because of it”; because of the contempt of it;

but he that feareth the commandment; receives the word with reverence, trembles at it; fears God, and keeps his commandments, and fears to break them: he

shall be rewarded; with good, as the Targum adds; for in keeping the commandments of God there is great reward: or, “shall enjoy peace”, or “be in safety”^{f371}; for great peace have they which love the law of God, and serve it: or, “shall be sound, [and] in health”^{f372}; when those that despise it “shall be corrupted”^{f373}; as the word in the preceding clause may be rendered.

Ver. 14. *The law of the wise [is] a fountain of life*, etc.] Or “doctrine”^{f374}; the doctrine of those who are taught by the word, and are wise unto salvation; the words or doctrines of the wise, which are given forth by one Shepherd; the instructions of such who are like Scribes, well instructed themselves unto the kingdom of heaven: these are as a fountain of living water; which are the means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving and refreshing the souls of weary saints; and bring life and immortality to light, and point and lead to eternal life: and so direct souls

to depart from the snares of death; the snares of sin, Satan, and the world, to shun and avoid them; with which men being entangled, are brought to destruction and death.

Ver. 15. *Good understanding giveth favour*, etc.] A good understanding in things natural and civil gives favour among men; and so a good understanding in divine and spiritual things gives a man favour among religious people, makes him taken notice of by them, and acceptable to them: and such an understanding no man has, unless it be given him; and such appear to have one that do the commandments of God, (^{<B10>}Psalm 111:10). The Israelites, for having and keeping the statutes of the Lord, were accounted by others a wise and an understanding people; and Christ, as man, when he increased in wisdom, grew in favour with God and men. It may be rendered, “good doctrine”, as the Vulgate Latin version, or “right doctrine”, as the Arabic version, “gives grace”^{f375}; is the means of conveying grace into the hearts of men, and of increasing it. What if it should be rendered, “grace gives a good understanding”^{f376}? since it is certain, that an understanding to know God and Christ is a gift of grace, (^{<B10>}1 John 5:20);

but the way of transgressors [is] hard; ungrateful and unpleasant to themselves and others; it is a rough and rugged way, in which they stumble and fall; and cannot walk with pleasure themselves, when their consciences are awakened, and they are loaded with guilt, and filled with terror; and must be very disagreeable to those who have seen the evil of them.

Ver. 16. *Every prudent [man] dealeth with knowledge*, etc.] In order to get more, and with men of knowledge for the same purpose; all he does is with knowledge and discretion; he does not meddle with things, nor has he to do with persons, he knows nothing of; he both acts and speaks with knowledge, cautiously, wisely, considering well time, place, and persons: and every wise and good man deals with evangelical knowledge, and

studies to grow in the knowledge of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; in the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ; the issue of which is life eternal;

but a fool layeth open [his] folly; or “spreads”^{f377} it; and exposes it to the view of everyone, by his foolish talk and indiscreet actions.

Ver. 17. *A wicked messenger falleth into mischief*, etc.] That does not do his errand right, nor deliver his message faithfully; such an one falls from the degree of honour in which he was into disgrace; he loses his master’s favour that sent him; he is degraded from his post and office: he falls “by evil”, or “into evil”^{f378}; by the evil of sin, into the evil of punishment. So wicked ministers and false teachers, such who transform themselves into the apostles of Christ and into angels of light, who corrupt the word of God, and handle it deceitfully; these shall receive their just condemnation; since they do a deal of mischief to the souls of men, and therefore shall fall into mischief themselves, even into everlasting perdition;

but a faithful ambassador [is] health; or, “an ambassador of truths”^{f379}; one that performs his embassy well and truly, he is salutary, useful, and profitable to himself, and to them that send him: the word for ambassador is translated an “hinge”, (⁴¹⁸⁴Proverbs 26:14); and he is so called, because upon his negotiations abroad the hinge of political affairs turn at home. An ambassador of Christ, who does his work faithfully, keeps back nothing that is profitable, but declares the whole counsel of God; the sound doctrines he delivers are health to the souls of men; as well as he is approved of God and Christ; and so it turns to his own health and advantage, who will hear one day said unto him, “Well done, good and faithful servant”, (⁴¹⁵³Matthew 25:23).

Ver. 18. *Poverty and shame [shall be to] him that refuseth instruction*, etc.] Of parents, masters, and ministers of the word; the instruction of wisdom, the instruction of the Gospel, in things relating to their present spiritual peace, and to their eternal welfare: such generally come to poverty and disgrace in this life, and to everlasting shame and contempt in another; (see ^{4161b}Proverbs 5:11,12);

but he that regardeth reproof; the reproof of the word, and of the ministers of it, and of all good men, and takes it kindly, and acts according to it,

shall be honoured; with riches and reputation; if not with the riches of this world, yet with the riches of grace and glory; and shall have honour among

the saints, and from the Lord himself; who will honour those that honour him, as they do who regard the reproof and instruction of his word, (^{<0823>}1 Samuel 2:30).

Ver. 19. *The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul*, etc.] Whether the desire be after riches and honour, after wisdom and knowledge; or after the best things, the knowledge of God, and communion with him; an interest in Christ, and the blessings of his grace, as pardon, righteousness, etc. and a right and title to eternal glory and happiness, and the enjoyment of that: and how sweet are these things the soul desires, when they are possessed! (see ^{<0132>}Proverbs 13:12); such are “the desires of the godly”, as the Septuagint render the word;

but [it is] abomination to fools to depart from evil; they cannot bear the thoughts of parting with their lusts; they are so delightful to them, not knowing anything of the sweetness of the things before mentioned; and which they can never enjoy without departing from sin, to which they are exceedingly averse.

Ver. 20. *He that walketh with wise [men] shall be wise*, etc.] Who is a companion of them that fear the Lord; converses frequently with them in private about spiritual and experimental things, and walks with them in public in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; he by those means grows wiser and wiser, gains a large stock of spiritual knowledge and experience; for this holds good both in natural and spiritual wisdom, a man of any capacity at all will improve by keeping wise company;

but a companion of fools shall be destroyed; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “shall become like them”; be a fool as they are, and grow still more and more foolish. The Septuagint version is, “shall be known”; known by the company he keeps to be a fool also: or rather, “shall be broken”^{>f380}; ruined and destroyed, “evil communications corrupt good manners”, (^{<4153>}1 Corinthians 15:33), and so bring to ruin and destruction.

Ver. 21. *Evil pursueth sinners*, etc.] They pursue the evil of sin, and the evil of punishment pursues them, and at last overtakes them; their damnation, though it may seem to slumber and linger, it does not; it is upon the full speed after them, and will quickly seize upon them. Some understand this of the evil of sin in the conscience, which pursues the sinner, and fills him with terror;

but to the righteous good shall be repaid; or, “he shall recompense the righteous with good”^{f381}, or “good to the righteous”; that is, God shall do it; for all the good things they have done, from a right principle, and to a right end; which good works of theirs will pursue and follow them; and for all the ill things they have suffered for righteousness’s sake, a reward of grace, though not of debt, will be given them; as they have had their evil things here, they shall have their good things hereafter; as well as are often recompensed in this life, either in themselves or in their posterity, as follows.

Ver. 22. *A good [man] leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children*, etc.] He not only has a sufficiency for the present support of himself and family; but is so prospered and succeeded, as to leave an inheritance after him; and which is continued to and enjoyed, not only by his immediate offspring, but theirs also; for being got honestly, it wears well; (see ^{<1031>}Proverbs 13:11);

and the wealth of the sinner [is] laid up for the just; the riches which wicked men get are laid up in the purposes of God for good men; and in his providence they are translated from the one to the other: so the riches of the Egyptians were designed for the Israelites, and by the providence of God were put into their hands; (see ^{<18716>}Job 27:16,17) (^{<1038>}Proverbs 28:8 ^{<1026>}Ecclesiastes 2:26).

Ver. 23. *Much food [is in] the tillage of the poor*, etc.] The poor are generally employed in tilling land; from whose labours in ploughing and sowing much food arises to men, bread to the eater, and seed to the sower: or a poor farmer, that has but a small farm, a few acres of land, to till; yet through his diligence and industry, with the blessing of God upon it, he gets a comfortable livelihood for himself and family; much food, or a sufficiency of it for the present year, and seed to sow land again the following year;

but there is [that is] destroyed for want of judgment; or discretion in tilling his land, and managing the affairs of husbandry, which is God’s gift, (^{<2336>}Isaiah 28:26); or, “through injustice”^{f382}, as some render it; for want of doing that which is right and just; not paying his labourers their hire and wages, as he ought, and so it is blasted, and comes to ruin. This may be spiritually applied. By the “poor” may be understood the poor ministers of the Gospel; who, though poor, make many rich, (^{<1030>}2 Corinthians 6:10); much spiritual food is to be had under their labours and ministrations, they

being employed in cultivating the churches: or else the poor saints and poor churches themselves may be meant; who are tilled by them, among whom is plenty of spiritual provisions; as in the poor Protestant churches, who, though in the wilderness, are nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, when there is no food in the apostate church of Rome: and so by the “tillage” may be meant the church of Christ itself, which is “God’s husbandry”, (~~400~~1 Corinthians 3:9); his agriculture, his tillage, his arable land; which he has separated and distinguished from the wide world, and employs his power and care about. For he is the husbandman, (~~450~~John 15:1); it is he that breaks up the fallow ground of men’s hearts; that makes the ground good which he tills; who sows the seed of the word, and the seed of his grace there; who waters it with the dews of his grace, and causes his people to grow as the corn, and ripens them for glory: and when the harvest is come, the end of the world or of life, he sends his reapers, his angels, to gather them, the wheat, into his garner. And he employs the ministers of the word as under husbandmen, as labourers under him and with him; these are the ploughmen that hold the plough of the Gospel, and manage that; these are his sowers that go forth, bearing the precious seed of the word, and sow it under his direction; and these water the ground that is sown and planted; their doctrines distil as the rain and dew upon it; and these bring in their sheaves with joy at last. And now in this tillage is much spiritual food; in God’s husbandry, the church, are the word and ordinances, in which are milk for babes, and meat for strong men, salutary, wholesome, nourishing, and strengthening food; here Christ, the best food, is set forth to faith to feed upon; true and real food, meat and drink indeed, spiritual, savoury, satisfying food; soul reviving, refreshing, and nourishing food; here is plenty of it, enough and to spare: and yet there are some that are destroyed for want of spiritual judgment and discerning; who take the poison of false teachers instead of the food to be had under a Gospel ministry; so the followers of the man of sin are given up to believe a lie and be damned; for want of judgment, they receive the grossest absurdities, and perish; as others also give in to damnable heresies, denying the deity, satisfaction, and righteousness of Christ, and other soul destroying notions; (see ~~306~~Hosea 4:6 ~~320~~2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 ~~600~~2 Peter 2:1).

Ver. 24. *He that spareth his rod hateth his son*, etc.] Who withholds or withdraws his rod of correction, which is in his hand, which he has power to use, and ought to exercise at proper times; he, instead of loving his son, may be said to hate him; for such fond love is no better than hatred; and, if

he really hated him, he could scarcely do a more ill thing by him than not to correct him for a fault; which was the sin of good old Eli, and both he and his sons suffered for it;

but he that loveth him; that has a true love for his son, and a hearty concern for his welfare and future good; he will regulate his affections by his judgment, and not give way to a fond passion, to the prejudice of his child: but he

chasteneth him betimes, or “in the morning”^{f383}; in the morning of his infancy, before vicious habits are contracted, or he is accustomed to sinning, and hardened in it; or as soon as a crime is perpetrated, before it is forgot or repeated: or every morning, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; that is, continually, as often as it is necessary, or as faults are committed.

Ver. 25. *The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul*, etc.] He is blessed with a sufficient competency to live upon; and he is contented with what he has, and uses it moderately; he has enough to eat, and is contented with his portion, and eats no more than sufficeth; he eats to the satisfying of his appetite, and no more; he does not indulge to luxury and excess: and so as to spiritual things; he eats to the satisfying of his soul, with the goodness and fatness of God’s house, with the word and ordinances, with the promises of the Gospel, and with Jesus Christ, the bread of life; with these he is satisfied, as with marrow and fatness;

but the belly of the wicked shall want; not only spiritual food, which he has no appetite for, but corporeal food; he shall starve in the midst of plenty, not having a heart to put that food into his mouth, and fill his belly with it, as nature requires, through his covetousness; or, having spent his substance in rioting and wantonness, wants bread to satisfy the craving of his appetite.

CHAPTER 14

Ver. 1. *Every wise woman buildeth her house*, etc.] Not only by her fruitfulness, as Leah and Rachel built up the house of Israel; but by her good housewifery, prudent economy; looking well to the ways of her household; guiding the affairs of her house with discretion; keeping all things in a good decorum; and bringing up her children in virtue, and in the fear and admonition of the Lord. So Christ, who in this book goes by the name of “Wisdom”, or the wise woman, builds his house upon himself, the Rock; and all his people on their most holy faith, by means of the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances: he guides and governs his house, where he is, as a Son in it and over it; and of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, taken care of, and wisely and plentifully provided for: and so Gospel ministers, who are wise to win souls, being well instructed in the kingdom of God; these “wise women”^{f384}, so it is in the original text, or wise virgins; these wise master builders lay the foundation Christ ministerially, and build souls on it; and speak things to the edification of the church and people of God, and the building of them up in faith and holiness;

but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands; the Vulgate Latin version adds, “being built”; this she does by her idleness and laziness; by her lavish and profuse way of living; by her negligence and want of economy; by her frequenting playhouses, and attention to other diversions; and so her family and the affairs of it go to wreck and ruin. Thus the apostate church of Rome, who is called a “woman”, and may be said to be a “foolish” one, being a wicked one and a harlot; (see ~~617D~~ Revelation 17:2,3); pulls down the true church and house of God with both hands, as much as in her lies, by her false doctrines, and superstitious worship and idolatry; and by her murders and massacres of the saints, with the blood of whom she is said to be drunk; nay, not only pulls it down with her hands, but treads upon it with her feet, (~~617D~~ Revelation 11:2). So likewise all false teachers do as this foolish woman does, by their impure lives and impious doctrines, defile the temple of God, subvert the faith of many; by means of whom the tabernacle of David, or house of God, is fallen down; the ruins and breaches of which Christ will repair in the latter day.

Ver. 2. *He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord*, etc.] It is plain that the fear of the Lord is upon the heart and before the eyes of such that walk according to the word of God, with a sincere desire to glorify him; for it is by the fear of the Lord that men depart from evil, and because of that they cannot do what others do; and therefore when a man walks uprightly, and his conversation is in all holiness and godliness, it shows that the fear of God has a place in his heart, which influences his outward behaviour;

but [he that is] perverse in his ways despiseth him; either God himself, whom the upright walker fears; for he that acts perversely, contrary to the law of God, or transgresses that, and goes out of the way, despises God the lawgiver, tramples upon his authority, stretches out his hand, and commits acts of hostility against him; and he that perverts the Gospel of Christ despises his ministers, and despises Christ himself, and him that sent him. Or else the meaning is, that such a perverse walker despises him that fears the Lord; so Aben Ezra interprets it; and such are generally the contempt of wicked men: to this sense is the Vulgate Latin version,

“he that walks in a right way, and fears God, is despised by him that walks in an infamous way;”

but the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “is despised”: meaning the perverse man.

Ver. 3. *In the mouth of the foolish [is] a rod of pride*, etc.] A proud tongue, or a tongue speaking proud and haughty things; with which foolish or wicked men smite others and wound and hurt their reputation and credit, and in the issue hurt themselves also; their tongue is not only a rod to others, but a scourge to themselves, or is the cause of evil coming upon them; such was the tongue of Pharaoh, as Jarchi on the place observes, (^{<1018>}Exodus 5:2); and of those the psalmist speaks of, (^{<1073>}Psalms 73:9); and particularly of antichrist, whose mouth is opened in blasphemies against God, and his tabernacle, and his saints, (^{<6115>}Revelation 13:5,6);

but the lips of the wise shall preserve them; from speaking such proud and haughty things against God and men; or from being hurt by the tongues of men or their own; yea, what coaxes out of their mouth is confounding and destructive to their enemies, (^{<6115>}Revelation 11:5).

Ver. 4. *Where no oxen [are] the crib [is] clean*, etc.] Or “empty”^{f385}, so Jarchi and Aben Ezra. Oxen were used in Judea in several parts of

husbandry; in ploughing the land, bringing home the corn, and in threshing or treading it out, (^{<f320>}Deuteronomy 22:10 25:4). Now where these are not, or not used, where husbandry is neglected, there is no straw in the crib for beasts, and much less food for men; or rather, no corn or “wheat”^{f386} on the “threshingfloor”^{f387}, or in the barn, granary, or storehouse; for so the same word is rendered, (^{<2f105>}Jeremiah 50:26); and in this manner it is interpreted by Gersom here, as also by Kimchi^{f388}: the word translated “clean” is used for “wheat”, (^{<30f5>}Amos 8:5). By supplying the negative particle, the whole may be rendered thus; “where no oxen are, the threshingfloor”, “granary”, or storehouse, “is without wheat”; or there is no wheat “on the floor”, or “in the barn”, etc. the note of Jarchi on the text is,

“where there are no scholars of the wise men, there is no instruction in the constitutions.”

But much better is the mystical sense, thus; that where there are no ministers of the Gospel, there is no food for souls. Oxen are an emblem of faithful and laborious ministers. The ox was one of the emblems in the cherubim, which design Gospel ministers; the names by which oxen are called agree with them. Here are two words used of them in the text; the one comes from a root which signifies to “teach”, “lead”, “guide”, and “govern”; and the same word for “oxen” signifies “teachers”, “leaders”, “guides”, and “governors”; names which most properly belong to ministers of the word: the other word comes from a root which signifies to “see”, to “look”; because these creatures are sharp sighted. Ministers are seers, overseers, and as John’s living creatures in (^{<60f5>}Revelation 4:6); one of which was an ox, were full of eyes, within, and before, and behind. So ministers of the word had need to have good sight, to look into the Scriptures, and search them; to look to themselves and to their flock, and to look out to discover enemies, and danger by them; and to look into their own experience, and into things both past and to come. There is a likeness in ministers to these creatures, as to the nature of them; they are clean, creatures, as such should be that minister in holy things; and chew the cud, as such should revolve in their minds and constantly meditate upon divine things; and, like them, are patient and quiet under the yoke; and are not only strong to labour, but very laborious in the word and doctrine; submit to the yoke, draw the plough of the Gospel; bring home souls to Christ, to his church, and to heaven; and tread out the corn, the mysteries of grace, out of the sacred writings. Now where there are no such laborious and

diligent ministers of the word, as there are none in the apostate church of Rome, there is no spiritual food for the souls of men; but a famine of the word, and men perish for lack of knowledge;

but much increase [is] by the strength of the ox; as there is a large increase of the fruits of the earth, through the tillage of it by proper instruments; as by the strong and laborious ox, whose strength is employed in ploughing the ground^{f389} and treading the corn; which is put for all means of husbandry, where that is used or not: so through the unwearied labours of Gospel ministers, the blessing of God attending them, there is much spiritual food; (see ^{<4033>}Proverbs 13:23). There is an increase of converts, a harvest of souls is brought in; and an increase of gifts and of grace, and of spiritual light and knowledge, and plenty of provisions; which spiritual increase, through the ministry of the word, is owing to God, (^{<4116>}1 Corinthians 3:6,7).

Ver. 5. *A faithful witness will not lie*, etc.] For that would be contrary to his character as faithful; and as he will not witness to a falsehood upon oath in a court of judicature, so neither will he tell a lie in common conversation. This may be applied to Gospel ministers, who are witnesses of Christ; the Gospel they preach is a testimony concerning him, and they bear a faithful witness to the truth; nor will they, knowingly and willingly, deliver out a falsehood, or a doctrinal lie, since “no lie is of the truth”, (^{<4121>}1 John 2:21); the character of a faithful witness is given to Christ, (^{<4115>}Revelation 1:5 3:14); who is a “witness” of his father’s love and grace, of his mind and will, and of the doctrines of the Gospel relating to himself, and the method of salvation by him; and he is “faithful” to him that appointed him; nor can he nor will he lie, for he is “truth” itself;

but a false witness will utter lies; or “blow”^{f390} them out, and spread them abroad in great plenty; he will not stick to tell them, and, having no conscience, will utter them as fast as he can, with all boldness and confidence; for one that fears not to bear testimony to a falsehood upon oath, will not scruple to lie in common talk. Or the words, “nay” be rendered, “he that uttereth lies [will be] a false witness”; he that accustoms himself to lying, in his conversation with men in private company, will become a false witness upon occasion in a public court of judicature: such an one is not to be depended on; lesser sins lead to greater, lying to perjury. So false teachers, and the followers of the man of sin, speak lies in

hypocrisy, doctrinal ones, which they are given up to believe; and such as do so are false witnesses, deceivers, and antichrist.

Ver. 6. *A scorner seeketh wisdom, and [findeth it] not,* etc.] So the scornful Greeks, that scoffed at the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel, sought natural wisdom, and thought they found it, and professed they had; but professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and with all their wisdom knew not God; and false teachers, that boasted of their evangelical wisdom, and of their great attainments in Gospel light, and derided others, were ever learning, and never came to the knowledge of the truth; and the scornful Jews, that mocked at the true Messiah, would seek him, the Wisdom of God, as they have done, and find him not; (see ^{<4073>}John 7:34); Men often seek for wisdom in a wrong way and manner, in the use of wrong means; and seek it of wrong persons, and to wrong ends and purposes, and so seek amiss and find not; and some seek for wisdom, even evangelical wisdom, in a scornful manner, in a jeering sarcastic way, as the scoffing Athenians did, (^{<4478>}Acts 17:18,19); and find it not, nor Christ the substance of it, and so perish for lack of knowledge of him;

but knowledge [is] easy unto him that understandeth; the knowledge of Wisdom, or of Christ, is easy to him that has a spiritual understanding given him; the knowledge of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, is easy to him to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; there is nothing perverse or froward in the words and doctrines of Christ; they are all plain to man whose understanding is opened by the Spirit of God; especially such as relate to the glory of Christ's person, and to the way of life and salvation by him; (see ^{<4088>}Proverbs 8:8,9).

Ver. 7. *Go from the presence of a foolish man,* etc.] A wicked one; avoid him, shun his company, depart from him, have no fellowship with him, it, being dangerous, infectious, and hurtful;

when thou perceivest not [in him] the lips of knowledge; when it is observed that his lips pour out foolishness, what is corrupt and unsavoury, unchaste and filthy; what does not minister grace to the hearers, nor is for the use of edifying, nor any ways improving in useful knowledge, but all the reverse: the Targum is,

“for there is no knowledge in his lips,”

in what is expressed by them; some understand this ironically, and render the words thus, “go right against a foolish man”^{f391}; join in company with

him, “and thou shalt not know the lips of knowledge”, or learn anything by him; if you have a mind to be ignorant, keep company with a foolish man; so Jarchi and Gersom: or rather to this sense the words may be rendered, “go to a foolish man, seeing thou knowest not the lips of knowledge”^{f392}, since thou dost not approve of wise and knowing men, whose lips would teach knowledge; and despisest the Gospel, and Gospel ministers the pope of Rome, as Cocceius on the text serves, and hear him, what his holiness and infallibility says; or some other false teacher.

Ver. 8. *The wisdom of the prudent [is] to understand his way*, etc.] The way of his calling, in which he should abide, and how to manage it in the best manner; the way of his duty, that he may walk inoffensively both towards God and men; and the way of life and salvation, which is by Jesus Christ, which to understand and to walk in is the highest wisdom and prudence;

but the folly of fools [is] deceit: or “the wisdom of fools”, which the opposition requires, and is meant, and is what the Holy Ghost calls “folly”, as elsewhere, (^{438B}1 Corinthians 3:19); this is itself “deceit”; it is science, falsely so called; it lies in tricking and deceiving; and the issue of it is, not only the deceiving of others, but themselves also: such is the folly of the man of sin and followers, which lies in deceiving the inhabitants of the earth with their sorceries and superstitions, with their lying wonders and miracles; (see ^{510D}2 Thessalonians 2:10) (⁶⁶³⁴Revelation 13:14 18:23).

Ver. 9. *Fools make a mock at sin*, etc.] At sinful actions, their own or others; they make light of them, a jest of them, call evil good, and good evil; take pleasure in doing them themselves, and in those that do them; yea, sport themselves with the mischief that arises from them unto others; they make a mock at reproofs for them, and scoff at those that instruct and rebuke them; and laugh at a future state, and an awful judgment they are warned of, and in a scoffing manner say, “where is the promise of his coming?” Some, as Aben Ezra observes, render it “a sin offering”; and interpret it of the sin offerings and sacrifices under the law, as derided by wicked men; but may be better applied to the sin offering or sacrifice of Christ, who made his soul an offering for sin, to make satisfaction and atonement for the sins of his people; this is mocked at by false teachers, who deny it; and is exposed to derision and contempt by the Papists, by their bloodless sacrifice of the mass, and by their merits and works of supererogation, which they prefer to the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ.

The words may be rendered, “sin makes a mock of fools”^{f393}; it deceives them, it promises them pleasure, or profit, or honour, but gives them neither, but all the reverse;

but among the righteous [there is] favour: they enjoy the favour of God and man; or “there is good will”^{f394}, good will towards men; they are so far from making a mock at sin, and taking delight in the mischief that comes by it to others, that they are willing to do all good offices unto men, and by love to serve their friends and neighbours: or “there is acceptance”^{f395}; they are accepted with God upon the account of the sin offering, sacrifice, and satisfaction of Christ, which fools mock and despise.

Ver. 10. *The heart knoweth his own bitterness*, etc.] Or “the bitterness of his soul”^{f396}, the distress of his conscience, the anguish of his mind; the heart of man only knows the whole of it; something of it may be known to others by his looks, his words, and gestures, but not all of it; (see ^{<410>}1 Corinthians 2:10 ^{<421>}Job 23:2); bitterness of soul often arises from outward troubles, pains, and diseases of body, losses, crosses, and disappointments, (^{<4010>}1 Samuel 1:10,15 ^{<4310>}Job 3:20 7:11 10:1 ^{<4385>}Isaiah 38:15,17).

Sometimes it is upon spiritual accounts; but this is not the case of every heart; men may be in the gall of bitterness, and have no bitterness of soul on account of it; the sensualist and voluptuous worldling feels nothing of it, nor the hardened and hardhearted sinner; only such who are awakened and convinced by the Spirit of God; to these, as sin is a bitter thing in itself, it is so to their taste; it makes bitter work for repentance in them; it brings trembling and astonishment on them; fills them with shame and confusion of face, causes self-loathing and abhorrence, and severe reflections upon themselves; seeing sin in its own colours, they are cut to the heart and killed with it; they are pressed down with the guilt of sin, and the load of it; and, having no views of pardon, are in that distress and bitterness of soul which no tongue can express nor heart conceive but what has felt the same;

and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy; or “mingle himself with it”^{f397}; he does not share in it or partake of it; this is more especially true of spiritual joy, which, as it is unspeakable to the man that possesses it, it passes the understanding of a natural man; he can form no true idea of it: spiritual joy is what a sensible sinner partakes of upon the Gospel, the joyful sound of salvation, reaching his ears and his heart, at the revelation of Christ in him and to him, as a Saviour; when an application of pardoning grace is made to his soul, and he has a view of the complete righteousness

of Christ, and his interest in it, and can see all his sins expiated and stoned for by his sacrifice; when he is favoured with a sight of the fulness of grace in Christ, and of the spiritual and eternal salvation he has wrought out for him; and likewise when he is indulged with a visit from him, and enjoys communion with him; and when he has a glimpse of eternal glory, and a well grounded hope of right unto it, and meetness for it: now a stranger, one that is a stranger to God and godliness, to Christ and the way of salvation by him, to the Spirit and his work of grace upon the heart, to the Gospel and the doctrines of it, to his own heart and the plague of it, to the saints and communion with them; knows nothing at all of the above joy, nor can he interrupt it, nor take it away.

Ver. 11. *The house of the wicked shall be overthrown*, etc.] Houses built to perpetuate their names and eternize their memory; and which, though built high and stately, strong and firm, yet by one accident or another shall come to ruin, when they imagined they would continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations, (^{<1991>}Psalm 49:11); or their families shall become extinct, none to be their heirs and inherit their estates, and transmit their name to posterity; or the substance of their house, their riches and wealth, especially that gotten dishonestly, shall waste away: and in a spiritual sense the house or hope of such, as to eternal salvation, being built on the sand, or something of their own, their external duties, or an outward profession of religion, shall not stand; though they lean upon it and would hold it fast, but it shall fall, and great shall be the fall of it; and particularly the apostate church of Rome, that synagogue of Satan, that habitation of devils, that hold of every foul spirit, and cage of every unclean bird, shall be overthrown with an utter overthrow, shall fall and never rise more, (^{<681>}Revelation 18:2);

but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish: their low and mean cottages, which are put up quickly, like tents movable from place to place, yet shall be established, (^{<215>}Proverbs 15:25); their families shall become numerous like a flock of sheep, (^{<1974>}Psalm 107:41,42); and their substance increase; they shall flourish in worldly things and grow rich, or however in spirituals, in girls and grace; shall flourish in the courts of the Lord, and tabernacles of the most High, like palm trees and cedars; for the allusion is to the flourishing of trees, (^{<1923>}Psalm 92:13,14); especially they will be in such flourishing circumstances in the latter day, when antichrist will be destroyed, and when the tabernacle of God will be with men, (^{<1978>}Psalm 72:8 ^{<621>}Revelation 21:3).

Ver. 12. *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man*, etc.] As the way of sin and wickedness does, it promising much carnal pleasure and mirth; there is a great deal of company in it, it is a broad road, and is pleasant, and seems right, but it leads to destruction; so the way of the hypocrite and Pharisee that trusts to his own righteousness, and despises others, and even the righteousness of Christ; or however does not submit to it, but tramples upon him, and counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and so is deserving of sorer punishment than the profane sinner; yet on account of his good works, as he calls them, fancies himself to be in a fair way for heaven and happiness; so Popery, through the pomp and grandeur and gaudiness of worship, through the lying miracles of the priests, and the air of devotion that appears in them, seems to be a right way;

but the end thereof [are] the ways of death; which lead unto eternal death; for that is the wages of sin, let it appear in what shape it will.

Ver. 13. *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful*, etc.] As Belshazzar's was in the midst of his feast and jollity, when he saw the writing on the wall; so sin may stare a man in the face, and guilt load his conscience and fill him with sorrow, amidst his merriment; a man may put on a merry countenance, and feign a laugh, when his heart is very sorrowful; and oftentimes this sorrow comes by sinful laughter, by mocking at sin and jesting at religion;

and the end of that mirth [is] heaviness: sometimes in this life a sinner mourns at last, and mourns for his wicked mirth, or that he has made himself so merry with religious persons and things, and oftentimes when it is too late; so the end of that mirth the fool in the Gospel promised himself was heaviness, when his soul was required of him; this was the case of the rich man who had his good things here, and his evil things hereafter.

Ver. 14. *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways*, etc.] One that is a backslider at heart, whose heart departeth from the Lord; in whom there is an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; and indeed apostasy begins at the heart, and shows itself in the life and conversation: there may be a backsliding when the heart does not wickedly depart from God; but is through the infirmity of the flesh and the force of temptation; from which backslidings the Lord's people are recovered, and which are healed by his grace; but here such an one is meant who willingly and heartily backslides; and such shall have the reward of their hands and actions given them, or the full and due punishment of their sins; they shall

have their bellyful of their own wicked ways and works, the just recompense of reward for them;

and a good man [shall be satisfied] from himself; shall eat the fruit of his own doings, shall be blessed in his deeds, and have peace and satisfaction therein; though not salvation by them, or for them: he shall be satisfied with the grace of God bestowed on him and wrought in him; and, from a feeling experience of the grace of God within him, shall be satisfied that he has in heaven a better and an enduring substance; or he shall be satisfied “from above himself”^{f398}, from the grace that is in Christ, out of the fulness which is in him; and shall be filled with all the fulness of God he is capable of; and especially in the other world, when he shall awake in his likeness. The Targum is,

“a good man shall be satisfied with his fear;”

and so the Syriac version, with the fear of his soul; it may be rendered, as by the Vulgate Latin version, “a good man shall be above him”^{f399}; that is, above the backslider; shall be better tilled, and be more happy than he.

Ver. 15. *The simple believeth every word*, etc.] Every thing that is said to him every story that is told him, and every promise that is made him; and so is easily imposed upon, and drawn in to his hurt: every word of God, or doctrine of his, ought to be believed; because whatever he says is true, he cannot lie; every word of his is pure, free from all error and falsehood; it is a tried word, and found to bear a faithful testimony, and, if we receive the witness of then, the witness of God is greater; besides, his word is profitable for instruction, and for the increase of peace, joy, and comfort, and is effectual to saving purposes: every word of Christ is to be believed, who is a teacher sent from God; whose mission is confirmed by miracles, and whose doctrine is not his own as man, but his Father’s; he is the faithful witness, and truth itself; his words are more than human, and besides are pleasant and wholesome: and every word and doctrine of his apostles, who received their mission commission, and doctrines from him, is also to be believed; but every spirit, or everyone that pretends to be a spiritual man, and to have spiritual gifts, is not to be believed; but the words and doctrines of ordinary men and ministers are to be first tried by the unerring rule of the sacred Scriptures; yea, the doctrines of the apostles were examined by them; (see [Gen](#) 1 John 4:1 [H71](#) Acts 17:11); they are “simple”, weak, silly, foolish persons, that believe all they hear, whether right or wrong, true or false, good or hurtful; they are children in

knowledge, who are tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, and are deceived with good words and fair speeches, (⁽⁴⁰⁴⁴⁾Ephesians 4:14) (⁽⁴¹⁶⁸⁾Romans 16:18). This truly describes the followers of the man of sin; who give heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; who believe as the church believes; that believe with an implicit faith; believe every word and doctrine the pope and councils say they should, though ever so absurd; as, for instance, the doctrine of transubstantiation: these are “simple” or fools with a witness, who give up their understandings, and even their senses unto, and pin their faith upon, another;

but the prudent [man] looketh well to his going; or “its going”^{f400}; to the course and tendency of the word he hears, or the doctrine which is proposed to his faith; he considers well whether it is agreeable or is contrary to the perfections of God; whether it derogates from the glory of any of the divine Persons; whether it makes for the magnifying the riches of God’s grace, and for the debasing of men; or for the depreciating of the one, and setting up of the other; and whether it is a doctrine according to godliness, or not, that tends to promote holiness of heart and life, or to indulge a loose conversation; and according to these criteria he judges and determines whether he shall believe it or not. Or, “to his going”; that is, to the going of the deceiver and impostor; he observes narrowly the methods he takes, the artifices he makes use of, the cunning sleight by which he lies in wait to deceive; how craftily he walks, and handles the word of God deceitfully; and he takes notice of his moral walk and conversation, and, as our Lord says, “ye shall know them by their fruits”, (⁽⁴¹⁷⁶⁾Matthew 7:16). Or else the meaning is, and which seems to be the sense of our version, that he looks well unto, and carefully observes, his own goings; he takes heed to his ways, that they are right; that he is not in ways of his devising and choosing, but in God’s ways; in the way of life and salvation by Christ; in the path of faith on him, and in the way of holiness; that he has chosen the way of truth, and walks in that; and that every step he takes in doctrine is according to the word of truth; and that whatever he does in worship is agreeably to the divine rule; and that every path of duty he treads in is according to the same, and as he has Christ for a pattern, and the Spirit for a guide; and that his walk is as becomes the Gospel, worthy of the calling wherein he is called, and that it is circumspect and wise; and such a man may be truly said to be a “prudent” man: the Targum is,

“he attends to his good;”

and so he does.

Ver. 16. *A wise [man] feareth, and departeth from evil*, etc.] He fears God, and is careful not to offend him; wherefore he departs from sin, stands at a distance from it, abstains from all appearance of it; being influenced by the goodness and grace of God unto him, he fears the Lord and his goodness, and therefore avoids all occasions of sinning against him: his motive is not merely fear of punishment, as Jarchi, but a sense of goodness; and now, as it is through the influence of divine fear that men depart from evil; so to do this shows a good understanding, and that such a man is a wise man, (^{<2016>}Proverbs 16:6 ^{<1828>}Job 28:28);

but the fool rageth, and is confident; he fears neither God nor men, he sets his mouth against both; he “rages” in heart, if not with his mouth, against God and his law, which forbid the practice of such sins he delights in; and against all good men, that admonish him of them, rebuke him for them, or dissuade him from them: and “is confident” that no evil shall befall him; he has no concern about a future state, and is fearless of hell and damnation, though just upon the precipice of ruin; yet, as the words may be rendered, “he goes on confidently”, nothing can stop him; he pushes on, regardless of the laws of God or men, of the advices and counsels of his friends, or of what will be the issue of his desperate courses in another world.

Ver. 17. [*He that is] soon angry dealeth foolishly*, etc.] A man that is quick and short, of a hasty spirit, and presently discovers anger and resentment in his face; he says and does many foolish things, which he afterwards is sorry for, and repents, and is ashamed of; and he is to be pitied and forgiven;

and a man of wicked devices is hated; one that hides his anger, covers his resentment, contrives schemes to revenge himself, and waits an opportunity to put them in execution, is justly hateful to God and men.

Ver. 18. *The simple inherit folly*, etc.] It is natural and hereditary to them, they are born like wild asses colts; the foolish sayings and proverbs, customs and practices, of their ancestors, though they have been demonstrated to be mere folly, yet these, their posterity, approve them; they love, like, and retain them as their patrimony, (^{<18112>}Job 11:12) (^{<1913>}Psalm 49:13). Such are the foolish traditions, customs, principles, and doctrines, of the church of Rome, handed down from father to son; and

because Popery is the religion they have been bred and brought up in, though so foolish and absurd, they will not relinquish it;

but the prudent are crowned with knowledge; natural, civil, and spiritual, especially the latter; evangelical knowledge, the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, and of Gospel truths; they are honoured with an acquaintance with them; and they esteem the knowledge of these above all things else, and reckon all things else but loss and dung in comparison of them; they are as a crown unto them, and the knowledge of them is the way to the crown of life; yea, is itself life eternal, (^{<518B>}Philippians 3:8 ^{<517B>}John 17:3). Or, they “crown themselves with knowledge”^{f401}; they labour after it, pursue it with eagerness, follow on to know the Lord, and attain to a large share of it; surround, encompass, and lay hold upon it, and gird themselves about with this girdle of truth. Or, “they crown knowledge”^{f402}; do honour to that, by putting it in practice; by adding to it temperance, and every virtue, and by bringing others to it; and are an ornament to it in their lives and conversation; they adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour.

Ver. 19. *The evil bow before the good*, etc.] Wicked men before good men. This, as Jarchi observes, respects future time; even the latter day glory, or the spiritual times of the Messiah, when the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the saints of the most High: for though there may have been some few instances of this kind, as Haman bowing before Mordecai, and the Heathen emperors before Constantine; and there may be some now, in some cases where obligation requires; yet this is far from being general, as it will be in the spiritual reign of Christ; when the sons of those that afflicted the church will come bending to her, and they that have despised her shall bow themselves down at the soles of her feet; and even great personages too shall bow down and lick the dust of her feet; the kings of the earth, who before have been in confederacy with antichrist, and have persecuted the saints, now shall hate the whore, and honour the true church of Christ: this will be in the Philadelphian state, which is the same with the spiritual reign of Christ; such who called themselves Jews, and are not, shall come and worship before the feet of the church, and own that she and her members are the favourites of heaven, (^{<217B>}Daniel 7:27) (^{<242B>}Isaiah 49:23 60:14 ^{<618B>}Revelation 3:9);

and the wicked at the gates of the righteous; or, “come to the gates of the righteous”, as the Syriac version supplies it; they come and knock there,

stand and wait, or lay themselves down; become prostrate and humble supplicants for relief and protection, as beggars do. This may also respect their attendance at Wisdom's gates, at the gates of Zion, on public ordinances, for counsel and instruction, which before they despised, (^{208b}Proverbs 8:34). The Septuagint version is, "shall serve thy gates"; that is, at them; (see ^{230b}Isaiah 60:11,12).

Ver. 20. *The poor is hated even of his own neighbour*, etc.] As well as of strangers; that is, he is shy of him; he does not care to take any notice of him, or be friendly with him, lest he should be burdensome to him. Poverty brings a man into contempt and disgrace; the same man, in affluence and indigence, is respected or disrespected: this is true, as Gersom observes, of a man that is poor, whether in money or in knowledge, in his purse or in his understanding;

but the rich [hath] many friends; or, "many [are] the lovers of the rich"^{f403}: for the sake of their riches; either for the sake of honour or profit, or because the rich want nothing of them, or because they themselves may gain something by them: this also is observed by the above Jewish commentator to be true of the rich in substance or in wisdom; but the former sense is best; for a wise man, if poor in the world, is but little regarded.

Ver. 21. *He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth*, etc.] He that despiseth his neighbour in his heart, speaks slightly of him, overlooks him, is not friendly to him, will neither converse with him, nor relieve him in his necessity; for it seems to be understood of his poor neighbour; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, "he that despiseth the poor"; that despises him for his poverty; because of his pedigree and education, and the low circumstances he is in; or on account of his weakness and incapacity, or any outward circumstance that attends him; such an one sins very greatly, is guilty of a heinous sin; and he will be reckoned and dealt with as a sinner, and be condemned and punished, and so be unhappy and miserable;

but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy [is] he; or,

"that gives to the poor,"

as the Targum; who has compassion on him in his distress, and shows it by relieving him: he that shows favour to the meek and humble ones, as the word^{f404} may be rendered, and as they generally are that are in affliction

and poverty, for these tend to humble men; and such who regard them in their low estate are “happy” or blessed; they are blessed in things temporal and spiritual, and both here and hereafter; (see ^{<1940>}Psalm 41:1-3 ^{<1087>}Matthew 5:7).

Ver. 22. *Do they not err that devise evil?* etc.] Certainly they do; they go astray from the right way, from the word of truth, from the Gospel of Christ, who contrive schemes to commit sin, and do mischief to their neighbours; or who “plough”^{f405} it, and sow it, and expect a fine harvest; but they will be mistaken, and find it will not turn to account, and that they have took a wrong course, and have gone out of the way: none more mischievous devisers or contrivers of evil than the Papists, and none more sadly and fatally err;

but mercy and truth [shall be] to them that devise good; who devise liberal things, to do good to the poor and needy; to their neighbours, their fellow creatures and fellow Christians: such receive grace and “mercy” at the hands of God, and his “truth” will appear in making good all promises to them; mercy and truth will preserve them from the evil way, and guide them in the right way, so that they shall not err as others do; neither from the doctrines of grace and truth, nor from the practice of them.

Ver. 23. *In all labour there is profit,* etc.] Or “abundance”^{f406}; much is got by it, food, raiment, riches, wealth, wisdom, honour; either with the labour of the hands or head, and nothing is to be got without labour; and he that is laborious in his calling, whether it be by manual operation, working with his hands that which is good; or by hard study, much reading, and constant meditation, is like to gain much for his own use and the good of others;

but the talk of the lips [tendeth] only to penury; or “want”^{f407}, of food and raiment, the common necessities of life; a man that spends his time in idle talk, boasting of what he can do and does, and yet does nothing, is in a fair way to come to beggary: so all talk about wisdom, and knowledge, and religion, without making use of the proper means of improvement, tends to the poverty of the mind; and generally they are most empty of knowledge, natural or spiritual, that talk and brag most of it; empty casks make the greatest sound; good discourse, wholesome words, sound doctrine, thoroughly digested, tend indeed to edification, to the enriching of the mind; but vain words, the enticing words of men’s wisdom; logomachies, striving about words to no profit; and all great swelling words of vanity,

which are all mere lip labour; they tend to spiritual poverty and leanness of soul.

Ver. 24. *The crown of the wise [is] their riches*, etc.] Riches being used by them to increase and improve their knowledge and wisdom, and for the good of men, are an honour to them, and give them credit and reputation among men of sense and goodness; (see ²⁰⁷¹Ecclesiastes 7:11, 12);

[but] the foolishness of fools [is] folly; mere folly, extreme folly, just the same as it was; riches make them never the wiser; yea, their folly is oftentimes made more manifest through the ill use they make of their riches; spending them in the gratification of their sinful lusts; and making no use of them for their own improvement in knowledge, or for the good of their fellow creatures. The Targum is,

“the glory of fools is their folly;”

and that is no other than their shame, and in which they glory; such fools are wicked men.

Ver. 25. *A true witness delivereth souls*, etc.] Or, “a witness of truth”^{f408}: one that witnesses truth upon oath in a court of judicature, he “delivers souls”; men, not one man only, but many; a whole family, or more, in danger of being ruined; he delivers them, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions add, “from evils”; from evil charges and accusations brought against them; from the oppression of their enemies, from the loss of their good name, and from ruin and destruction, that otherwise would have come upon them; he delivers their “lives”^{f409}, as it may be rendered, in danger of being lost by false accusations: so a witness of the truth of Christ, or a faithful minister of the Gospel, not only saves himself, but them that hear him; and is an instrument of delivering the souls of men from error and damnation;

but a deceitful [witness] speaketh lies; boldly, openly, by wholesale; he blows them out^{f410}, to the ruin of the good names and characters, and to the destruction of the lives, of the innocent; and so a false teacher, one that lies in wait to deceive, speaks lies in hypocrisy, doctrinal lies, to the ruin of the souls of men. The Targum is,

“he that speaketh lies is deceitful;”

he is “deceit”^{f411} itself, as in the Hebrew text. Such is the man of sin, and such are his emissaries.

Ver. 26. *In the fear of the Lord [is] strong confidence*, etc.] Such who fear the Lord may be confident that he has a love to them, a delight in them; that his eye is upon them, and his heart towards them; and will communicate every needful good to them, and protect and defend them: or the Lord himself that is feared, who is the object of fear, called the fear of Isaac, (^{<0312>}Genesis 31:42); he is a strong tower, a place of defence to those that fear him and trust in him, (^{<0380>}Proverbs 18:10);

and his children shall have a place of refuge; the children of God, as those that fear him are; the Lord is a place of refuge to them, from the avenger of blood, from the vindictive justice of God; from the storm and tempest of divine wrath, and from the curses of a righteous law; as well as from the rage and persecutions of men.

Ver. 27. *The fear of the Lord [is] a fountain of life*, etc.] Where the true fear of God is, there is a real principle of grace, which is “a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life”, (^{<0044>}John 4:14); eternal life is connected with it; it makes meet for it, and issues in it: or the Lord, who is the object of fear, he is the fountain of life: as of natural, so of spiritual and eternal life; spiritual life springs from him, is supported and maintained by him, the consequence of which is life everlasting;

to depart from the snares of death; sins, transgressions, as Aben Ezra interprets it; these are the works of men’s hands, in which they are snared; these are the cords in which they are holden, and so die without instruction; the wages of them are death, even death eternal: likewise there are the snares of the world and of the devil, temptations to sin, with which being ensnared, lead to death; now the fear of the Lord is a means of delivering from and of avoiding those snares, and so of escaping death.

Ver. 28. *In the multitude of people [is] the king’s honour*, etc.] For it is a sign of a good and wise government, of clemency and righteousness being exercised, of liberty and property being enjoyed, of peace, plenty, and prosperity; which encourage subjects to serve their king cheerfully, and to continue under his reign and government peaceably; and which invites others from different parts to come and settle there also; by which the strength and glory of a king are much increased. This is true of the King of kings, of Jesus Christ, who is King of saints; his honour and glory, as

Mediator, lies in a large number of voluntary subjects, made “willing” to serve him “in the day of [his] power” upon them, as numerous as the drops of the morning “dew”, (^{<4811>}Psalm 110:3); such as he had in the first times of the Gospel, both among the Jews and among the Gentiles; and as he will have more especially in the latter day, when those prophecies shall be fulfilled in (^{<2804>}Isaiah 60:4-8); and so this is interpreted of the King Messiah, in an ancient writing^{f412} of the Jews;

but in the want of people [is] the destruction of the prince; or, “the consternation”^{f413} of him; if his people are destroyed in wars his ambition or cruelty has led him to; or they are driven out from his kingdom by persecution or oppression; hence follows a decay of trade, and consequently of riches; lack of cultivation of land, and so want of provision: in course of time there is such a decrease, that, as there are but few to carry on trade and till the land, so to fight for their prince, and defend his country; wherefore, when attacked by a foreign power, he is thrown into the utmost consternation, and is brought to destruction. This will be the case of the prince of darkness, the man of sin, antichrist; who, though however populous he may be, or has been, ruling over tongues, people, and nations, yet before long he will be deserted by them; one nation after another will fall off from him; they and their kings will hate him, make him bare and desolate, and burn him with fire, (^{<6675>}Revelation 17:15,16). Some render it, “the consternation of leanness”^{f414}; such consternation as causes leanness in a king.

Ver. 29. [*He that is slow to wrath [is] of great understanding*, etc.] Or “long in wrath”^{f415}; it is long before he is angry; he is longsuffering, bears much and long, is very patient; such an one appears to understand himself and human nature, and has a great command over his passions; which shows him to be a man of great wisdom and understanding;

but [he that is] hasty of spirit exalteth folly; or is “short of spirit”^{f416}; is soon angry; presently discovers resentment in his words, looks, and gestures; such an one “exalts folly”, prefers it to wisdom, sets it above himself, and makes it his master: or he “lifts” it^{f417} up; exposes his folly to public view, so that it is seen of all men to his disgrace.

Ver. 30. *A sound heart [is] the life of the flesh*, etc.] A heart made so by the grace of God, in which are sound principles of truth, righteousness, and holiness; these preserve from sin, and so from many diseases; whereby the life of the flesh or body is kept safe and sound, or that is kept in health and

vigour; or a “quiet heart”^{f418}; a heart free from wrath, anger, and envy, and such like passions and perturbations; this contributes much to the health of the body, and the comfort of life: or a “healing heart”, or “spirit”^{f419}; that is humane, kind, and friendly; that pities and heals the distresses of others, and makes up differences between persons at variance: such an one is “the life of flesh”^{f420}, as in the original text; or of men, of the same flesh and blood; the life of others, as well as of his own flesh; such an one contributes to the comfortable living of others as well as of himself;

but envy the rottenness of the bones; a man that envies the happiness and prosperity of others, this preys upon his own spirits, and not only wastes his flesh, but weakens and consumes the stronger parts of his body, the bones; it is as a “moth” within him, as the Arabic version: the Targum is,

“as rottenness in wood, so is envy in the bones;”

hence Ovid^{f421} calls it “*livor edax*”, and so Martial^{f422}.

Ver. 31. *He that oppressteth the poor reproacheth his Maker*, etc.] That does him any injury, either by scoffing at him, and reproaching him for his poverty; or by vexatious law suits; or by withholding from him his wages; or not giving him that relief which he ought: such an one not only injures the poor man; but reproaches God that made him, not only a man, but a poor man; and who is the Maker of the rich man also, (^{311B}Proverbs 22:2);

but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor; he that is desirous of honouring God, and glorifying him, will give of his substance to the poor; having compassion on him in his necessitous circumstances, will relieve him; and in so doing he honours God, whose image the poor man bears, and who has commanded him so to do. The words may be rendered, “he that hath mercy on the poor honoureth him”; that is, his Maker: so the Targum,

“he that hath mercy on him that suffers injury honoureth him.”

Ver. 32. *The wicked is driven away in his wickedness*, etc.] That is, at death, as the opposite clause shows; he is driven out of the world, his heart is so much set on; from all the good things of it, which are his all, his portion; from the place of his abode, which will know him no more; and from all his friends and acquaintance, with whom he has lived a merry and jovial life; he shall be driven out of light into darkness, even into outer darkness; into hell, which is a place of torment, a prison, a lake burning

with fire and brimstone; he shall be driven as a beast is, driven: and such is the man of sin, who shall go into perdition; and such are his followers, and that will be their end, (~~610~~ Revelation 13:1,11 17:8); he shall be driven sore against his will; the righteous depart, and desire to depart; but the wicked are driven, and go unwillingly, with reluctance; they would fain flee out of the hand of God, and yet they have no power to withstand; go they must, they are driven forcibly and irresistibly: and it may also denote the suddenness of their death, and the swiftness of their destruction. The driver is not mentioned; it may be understood of the Lord himself, who, in and by a storm of his wrath, hurls them out of their place; or of death, as having a commission from him, when a man has no power over his spirit to retain it; or of angels, good or bad, employed by the Lord in driving their souls to hell upon their separation from their bodies. The circumstance, “in his wickedness”, may denote their dying in their sins, unrepented of, unforgiven, and without faith in Christ; in the midst of them, in their full career of sin, under the power, faith, and guilt of it; and as sometimes, in the horror of a guilty conscience, in black despair, without any hope or view of pardon, the reverse of the righteous man; and so will have all their wickedness to answer for, it being not taken away, but found upon them: or this may be expressive of the cause of the wicked man’s being driven away, namely, his wickedness; for so it may be rendered and interpreted, “because of his wickedness”,^{f423} it is for that he shall die and go to hell: or it may be rendered, “into his evil”^{f424}; and so denote the everlasting punishment into which he shall go, being driven;

but the righteous hath hope in his death; not in the death of the wicked man, as Aben Ezra, when he shall be delivered, and he can do him no more hurt; but in his own death; he dies as other men; his righteousness, though it delivers him from eternal death, yet not from a corporeal one; though the death of a righteous man is different from others; he dies in Christ, in the faith of him, and in hope of eternal life by him; and to die his death is very desirable: he has a hope of interest in the blessings of grace and glory; which is a good hope through grace; is wrought in him at regeneration; and is founded on that righteousness from whence he is denominated righteous, even the righteousness of Christ; and is of singular use and advantage to him in life: and this grace he exercises at death; it carries him through the valley of death, and above the fears of it; he hopes, though he dies, he shall rise again; and he hopes to be in heaven and happiness, immediately upon

his dissolution, and to all eternity; he hopes to see God, be with Christ, angels and good men, for evermore. Jarchi's note is,

“when he dies, he trusts he shall enter into the garden of Eden, or paradise.”

Ver. 33. *Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding,* etc.]

It is in his heart, as the treasury where it is laid up, and where it is kept in safety; here it lies hid and undiscerned, unmolested and undisturbed; no noise is made about it, or any ostentation of it; it dwells quietly and constantly there;

but [that which is] in the midst of fools is made known; the least share of knowledge which such persons have, or think they have, does not lie long in the midst of them; they take every opportunity of showing it to others, or of letting others know what they have attained to; and thereby, instead of getting the character of wise and prudent men, obtain that of fools; for, though a prudent man is communicative of his knowledge to others, it is at proper times, and in proper places, and to proper persons, which fools do not observe; but, without any manner of judgment or discretion, or regard to persons, places, and seasons, vainly thrust out their knowledge, and so proclaim their folly. The Syriac version is,

“in the heart of fools it shall not be known;”

it has no place there.

Ver. 34. *Righteousness exalteth a nation,* etc.] Administered by the government, and exercised by subjects towards one another; doing justice between man and man: this exalts a nation, as it did the people of Israel, while practised among them; this sets a people above their neighbours, and high in the esteem of God and men; and is attended with privileges and blessings, which make a nation great and honourable. Some understand this of aims deeds, or beneficence to the poor; which, both in the Hebrew and Greek languages, is called righteousness; (see Gill on “~~400~~ Matthew 6:1”). It may be put for the whole of true religion, which is an honour to a nation, where it obtains; and is what makes the holy nation, and peculiar people, so truly illustrious; and particularly the righteousness of Christ makes such who are interested in it really great and noble, and promotes and exalts them to heaven and happiness;

but sin [is] a reproach to any people; where vice reigns, iniquity abounds, profaneness, impiety, and immorality of all sorts prevail, a people become mean and despicable; they fall into poverty and contempt; are neither able to defend themselves, nor help their neighbours, and so are despised by them. The word rendered “reproach” most commonly signifies “mercy” or goodness; and some render it, “and the mercy of a people is a sin offering”^{f425}; or as one: or it is so “to the nations”; it is as good as a sacrifice for sin, of which the word is sometimes used, or better, more acceptable to God, “who will have mercy, and not sacrifice”, (⁴⁰⁹³Matthew 9:13); even beneficence and kindness to the poor, the same with righteousness, as before. I think it may be as well rendered, “the piety” or religion “of the nations is sin”^{f426}; it being idolatry, as Aben Ezra observes: such is the religion of the antichristian nations, who worship idols of gold and silver; and though they may afflict themselves, as Gersom remarks of the idolatrous nations, with fasting and penance, with whippings and scourgings; yet it is nothing else but sin, will worship, and superstition.

Ver. 35. *The king’s favour [is] toward a wise servant*, etc.] Who does his prince’s business well, committed to him; manages all his affairs wisely and prudently; is diligent and careful to do everything for the king’s honour, and the good of his subjects; such an one has a share in royal favour, a place in the affections of his master; and is sure to be promoted to honour by him, and exalted to higher places of trust and profit, as well as to be protected and defended by him: so Christ, the King of kings, shows favour to his wise and faithful servants, (⁴¹²²Luke 12:42-44);

but his wrath is [against] him that causeth shame; who neglects his business, or does it foolishly; in such a manner as his prince is ashamed of him, and which brings shame and disgrace to himself; all which provokes the anger of his master, who discharges him from his service, and this fixes a mark of infamy upon him; (see ⁴¹²⁵Luke 12:45-48).

CHAPTER 15

Ver. 1. *A soft answer turneth away wrath*, etc.] Mild words, gentle expressions, delivered with kindness and tenderness, humility and submission; these will work upon a man's passions, weaken his resentments, and break and scatter the storm of wrath raised in his breast, just breaking forth in a very boisterous and blustering manner; so high winds are sometimes laid by soft showers. Thus the Ephraimites were pacified by Gideon's mild answer; and David by Abigail's very submissive and respectful address, (^{<0700>}Judges 8:1-3 ^{<0255>}1 Samuel 25:25-32);

but grievous words stir up anger; such as are rough and menacing, scornful and sneering, reproachful and reviling, proud, haughty, and overbearing; like those of Jephthah to the Ephraimites; and of the Ephraimites to the Gileadites; and of Nabal to David's servants, concerning him; and of Rehoboam, who answered the people roughly: in all which instances anger was stirred up, and either were or like to have been attended with bad consequences, (^{<0700>}Judges 12:1-4) (^{<0250>}1 Samuel 25:10,11,21,22 ^{<1123>}1 Kings 12:13,14). Or a "word" causing, or rather expressing, "grief"^{f427}; upbraiding others with being the cause of grief to them.

Ver. 2. *The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright*, etc.] As the heart of a wise and good man is filled with useful knowledge, civil, moral, spiritual, and evangelical; so he takes care to communicate it, at proper times and seasons, in proper places, and to proper persons; adapting it to their case and circumstances, so as it may be for their comfort, edification, and instruction, and minister grace unto them; which is using knowledge "well", as the word^{f428} signifies: such an use of it recommends it, and makes it appear beautiful and lovely, decorates and adorns it. Thus every good man, out of the good treasure of knowledge in his heart, brings forth his good things seasonably, to the use of edifying; in like manner, ministers of the word, scribes well instructed in the things of God, bring forth both new and old, to the profit of those to whom they minister; so Christ, as man and Mediator, had the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to weary souls;

but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness; their knowledge, as they take it to be, but it is no other than folly; this they throw out in great plenty, in a hurry, without fear or wit; they "babble" it out, as the word^{f429}

signifies, as water out of a fountain; their hearts are full of it, and their mouths proclaim it, (^{<31223>}Proverbs 12:23).

Ver. 3. *The eyes of the Lord [are] in every place*, etc.] Which are expressive of his omniscience, of the full, clear, distinct, and perfect knowledge, which he has of all creatures and things; so that nothing is hid from him, but all open and manifest to him; as they are to Christ the essential Word, (^{<30413>}Hebrews 4:13); and also of the providence of God with respect to all persons in general, and to his own people in particular; and as he is infinite and immense, omnipresent and in all places of the world, so his omniscience and providence reach everywhere, to places most distant and secret, and to persons in them, who cannot be concealed from him, since he fills heaven and earth, (^{<24223>}Jeremiah 23:23,24);

beholding the evil and the good; meaning not evil things and good things, though that is true; the one he beholds with dislike, the other with pleasure; but evil men and good men: he beholds them as from a watch tower, as the word ^{f430} signifies, from above, from heaven, where he is; (see ^{<49313>}Psalm 33:13,14). By “evil” men may be meant both profane sinners and carnal professors; such as are more openly wicked, and declare their sin, as Sodom, or more secretly so; he sees into all the wickedness there is in their hearts, all their secret devices against his people; the works done by them in the dark, as well as their more open ones; and his eyes are upon all of them, to bring them into judgment at the last day: his eyes are particularly on the proud, to abase them; such as are under a disguise of religion, and have a form of godliness, he has his eyes upon; he sees through all their disguises; he knows on what foot they took up their profession; he discerns between that and true grace; he sees how they retain their lusts with their profession; observes the springs and progress of their apostasy; and will fix his eyes on the man without a righteousness, not having on the wedding garment, and order him into outer darkness. He also beholds “good” men; he sees all their bad things, their sins, and corrects them for them; their good things, their graces, and the exercise of them; their good works, the fruits of his own grace; their weaknesses, and supports and strengthens them; their wants, and supplies them; their persons, and never withdraws his eyes from them: these are on them continually, to protect and defend them; nor will he leave them till he has brought them safe to heaven; (see ^{<31419>}1 Chronicles 16:9).

Ver. 4. *A wholesome tongue [is] a tree of life*, etc.] A tongue that delivers out salutary instructions, wholesome advice and counsel; a “healing tongue”,^{f431} as it may be rendered, which pacifies contending parties, and heals the divisions between them; to have the benefit of such a man’s company and conversation is like being in paradise. Such is the tongue of a Gospel minister, which delivers out the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ; sound speech and doctrines, which cannot be condemned; healing truths to wounded consciences, such as peace, pardon, righteousness, and atonement by the blood of Christ. These are the means of quickening dead sinners, reviving and comforting distressed ones, and show the way of eternal life unto them;

but perverseness therein [is] a breach in the spirit; impure, unchaste, unsavoury, and corrupt language, does mischief to the spirits of men; evil communications corrupt the heart and manners, defile the soul and the conversation; these and unsound doctrines eat as a canker; and as they make the heart of God’s people sad, whom he would not have made sad; so they bring distress and despair into the spirits of others, and make sad wounds and breaches there, which are never healed, and that both in the spirits of speakers and hearers; for damnable heresies bring swift destruction on the propagators of them, and them that receive them.

Ver. 5. *A fool despiseth his father’s instruction*, etc.] They are fools that despise any instruction that is wise, good, and profitable; and especially a father’s instruction, whose love, tender affection, and care, will not suffer him, knowingly, to give any but what is good and wholesome: wherefore to despise it is not only a contempt of his authority, but a slight of his love; which are both very aggravating, and sufficiently demonstrate his folly; and of which he may be himself convinced when it is too late, and say, “how have I hated instruction [and] despised reproof?” (⁴¹⁵²Proverbs 5:12). He is a fool that despises the instruction of anyone superior to him in years and experience; of ministers of the word; and especially of our Father which is in heaven, declared in the sacred Scriptures, which are written for instruction in righteousness;

but he that regardeth reproof is prudent; the reproof of a father, whose corrections are to be submitted to, and received with reverence; and especially of the Father of spirits, whose rebukes are in love, and for profit and advantage; yea, he is a wise man that regards the reproof of the word

of God, and the ministers of it; and indeed of any Christian, whether his superior, equal, or inferior, as David did, (^{431B}Psalm 141:5).

Ver. 6. *In the house of the righteous [is] much treasure*, etc.] God sometimes blesses the righteous with great riches, as he did Abraham; or, however, if they have but little, it is better than the riches of many wicked; because they have what they have with a blessing, and they are content with it: and they have abundance of spiritual treasure; they have God for their portion; Christ, and all good things along with him; the rich graces of the Spirit; a rich experience of the grace of God; and all this is but a pledge and earnest of what they shall possess hereafter;

but in the revenues of the wicked is trouble; they have much trouble in getting their riches, by which they pierce themselves through with many sorrows; they have much trouble in keeping them; cannot rest nor sleep because of their abundance, lest it should be taken away from them; and they have much trouble in parting with them, when they are, by one providence or another, stripped of them; and, besides, they have them with a curse, and are ever attended with uneasiness, on one account or another.

Ver. 7. *The lips of the wise disperse knowledge*, etc.] Scatter it about for the benefit of others; they are communicative and diffusive of it unto others, that fruit may abound to their account: so the first ministers of the Gospel diffused the savour of the knowledge of Christ and his Gospel in every place; their words went into all the earth, and their sound to the end of the world; and so every Gospel minister will speak according to the oracles of God, and according to the abilities and measure of the gift which he has received; and to the utmost of his power feeds souls with knowledge and understanding;

but the heart of the foolish [doth] not so; does not disperse knowledge, for he has no solid substantial knowledge in him: or, “the heart of the foolish [is] not right”^{f432}; it is full of folly and wickedness: or “the heart of the foolish [does] not [disperse that which is] right”^{f433}; true and right things, and the knowledge of them; but, on the contrary, as in (^{432D}Proverbs 15:2), “pours out foolishness”.

Ver. 8. *The sacrifice of the wicked [is] an abomination to the Lord*, etc.] Even those sacrifices which were of divine appointment under the former dispensation, when offered by wicked men, without faith in Christ, without any sense of sin, repentance for it, and reformation from it; when these

were used as a cloak for sin, under which they sheltered and satisfied themselves, and went on in sin; when they brought them “with a wicked mind”, as in (²⁰²⁷Proverbs 21:27); when either what they brought were not according to the law, the lame and the blind; or were not their own, but robbery for burnt sacrifice; or supposing that these would atone for their sins of themselves; when either of these, or all this, was the case, it was an abomination to the Lord; see (²⁰¹¹Isaiah 1:11-15 61:8 66:3). Wherefore much more must Pagan sacrifices be an abomination to him; which were not of his appointing, and were offered to devils, and not to him; and which were many of them very inhuman and shocking; as giving a man’s firstborn for his transgression, and the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul: and so likewise Papal sacrifices, the sacrifice of the mass; the bloodless sacrifice, the offering up again of the body and blood of Christ, they pretend to; which, as it is wicked and blasphemous, is an abomination to the Lord, and perhaps is chiefly intended. Sacrifice may stand for every religious duty performed by a wicked man, being hypocritically done, and with no good view; and all their good works, which seem to be so; and are either not according to the word and will of God, being never commanded by him, of which sort are many among the Papists; or they are not done in faith, and so sin, and do not spring from love to God; but are done with a heart full of enmity to him, and are not directed to his glory: in short, whatever is done by them, let it have ever such an appearance of devotion and goodness; yet if it is placed in the room of Christ, and used to the setting aside of his righteousness, satisfaction, and sacrifice, it is an abomination to the Lord;

but the prayer of the upright [is] his delight: the prayer of such, whose hearts are right with God; who have right spirits renewed in them; are Israelites indeed; have the truth of grace and root of the matter in them; are honest, sincere, and upright in heart: the prayer of such, which is an inwrought one, wrought in his heart by the Spirit of God, and so comes from God, and is his own breathing in him, must be well pleasing to him; that which is fervent, earnest, and importunate, which cometh not out of feigned lips, but from the heart, and is put up with a true heart, in the sincerity of it; the prayer of faith, the cry of the humble; the prayer which is addressed to God as a Father, in the name of Christ the Mediator, which comes perfumed with the incense of his mediation, introduced with the celebration of the divine perfections, contains humble confessions of sin and unworthiness, ascribes all blessings to the grace of God, and expresses

thankfulness for favours received, is very acceptable and delightful to God; though it is the prayer of a poor, mean, despicable creature in his own eyes, and in the eyes of others, (~~1927~~Psalm 102:17 9:12 ~~2014~~Song of Solomon 2:14 ~~2181~~Luke 18:11-14). This stands opposed to the pompous rites and ceremonies, the gaudy worship and costly sacrifices, of wicked men; such as used by the Papists.

Ver. 9. *The way of the wicked [is] an abomination unto the Lord,* etc.]

The way his heart devises, which he chooses and delights in, in which he walks; nor will he leave it, nor can he be diverted from it, but by the powerful grace of God. This is a way not good, but evil, and so an abomination to the Lord; and the whole tenor and course of his life, which is meant by his way being evil: hence his sacrifices, and all his external duties of religion performed by him, are abominable to the Lord; for, while he continues in a course of sin, all his religious exercises will be of no avail, cannot be pleasing and acceptable to God;

but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness; either after a justifying righteousness; not the righteousness of the law, which the carnal Jews followed after, but did not attain unto; nor is righteousness to be had by the works of the law, nor any justification by it, nor can a man be acceptable to God on account of it; but the righteousness of Christ, which he has wrought out, and is revealed in the Gospel: to follow after this supposes a want of one; a sense of that want; a view of the glory, fulness, suitableness, and excellency of Christ's righteousness; an eager desire after it, sometimes expressed by hungering and thirsting after it, as here by a pursuit of it; which means no other than an earnest and importunate request to be found in it: and such, as they shall be satisfied or filled with it, so they are loved by the Lord, and are acceptable to him through the righteousness they are seeking after: or else it may be understood of following after true holiness of heart and life, without which there is no seeing the Lord; and though perfection in it is not attainable in this live, yet a gracious soul presses after it, which is well pleasing in the sight of God.

Ver. 10. *Correction [is] grievous unto him that forsaketh the way,* etc.]

The right way, the way of God; the way of his commandments: the Vulgate Latin version is, "the way of life"; the same with the way of righteousness, which apostates, having known and walked in, turn aside from; (see ~~6025~~2 Peter 2:15,21). And such deserve severe correction, the chastisement of a cruel one, correction in wrath and hot displeasure; which, when they have,

is very disagreeable to them; they behave under it like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, and yet they are but dealt righteously with. Or the words may be rendered, “he [has had] bad discipline” or “instruction^{f434} that forsakes the way”; due care has not been taken of him; he has not been properly instructed, nor seasonably corrected; had he, he would not easily have departed from the way in which he should go; (see ^{<1216>}Proverbs 22:6). The Targum is,

“the discipline of an evil man causes his way to err;”

or him to err from his way;

[and] he that hateth reproof shall die; that hates the reproof of parents, masters, and ministers of the word; as he may be said to do that neglects and rejects it, and does not act agreeably to it: and such a man, dying in impenitence and without faith in Christ, dies in his sins; and sometimes shamefully, or a shameful death, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions, or an untimely one; as well as dies the second death, an eternal one.

Ver. 11. *Hell and destruction [are] before the Lord*, etc.] Or “the grave”^{f435}, which is the pit of destruction; where bodies being put, putrefy, and are destroyed by worms: this is known by the Lord, even the grave of everyone from the beginning; the graves of Adam, Abel, Abraham; he knows where their dust lies, and will raise it up again at the last day. Hades, or the invisible state of the departed, as the Septuagint has it, is manifest before him; he knows where departed spirits are; what their condition and employment be; and so the place and state of the damned, known by the name of “hell”; and may be called “destruction”, where soul and body are destroyed by the Lord with an everlasting destruction; and is the destruction which the broad way of sin leads unto. Now though we know not where this place is, who are there, and what the torments endured in it; yet all is before the Lord, and known to him: “tophet” is ordained of old; everlasting fire is prepared by the Lord for devils and wicked men; (see ^{<8316>}Job 26:6);

how much more then the hearts of the children of men? which, though desperately wicked, are known by him; who is the searcher of the hearts and the trier of the reins of the children of men: he to whom hell is naked, and can look into that outer darkness, the blackness of darkness, can look into a man’s heart, a second hell, in which all manner of wickedness is, and observe it all; he needs no testimony of man; he knows what is in man, all

his secret thoughts, wicked purposes, designs, and devices; (see ^{<417>}Jeremiah 17:9,10 ^{<412>}John 2:25 ^{<3412>}Hebrews 4:12,13).

Ver. 12. *A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him*, etc.] He that makes a jest of religion; scoffs at godliness and godly men; treats the Gospel and the ministers of it with contempt; makes a mock at good men, and all that is good; a pestilent fellow, as the Vulgate Latin version: such an one not only does not love, for more is intended than is expressed; but hates him that reproves him, and especially if publicly, (^{<3150>}Amos 5:10); he thinks ill of him; bears him a grudge, and abhors him; and speaks evil of him, and reproaches him; and does all he can to the injury of his person and name; hence the advice of the wise man, (^{<2107>}Proverbs 9:7,8). Some render it, he “loves not reproving himself”, or “to reprove himself”^{f436}; he does not care to look into his own heart and ways, or to call himself to an account for what he does; nor to check himself in the pursuit of sin, nor argue with and reprove himself for it;

neither will he go unto the wise; to the private houses of wise and good men; nor to the house of wisdom, or place of public instruction, where wise dispensers of the word give good advice and counsel; scorners do not choose to go to either, lest they should be reprov'd for their evil ways, and be advised leave them; neither of which is agreeable to them; (see ^{<411>}John 3:20,21).

Ver. 13. *A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance*, etc.] Or, a “joyful heart”^{f437}; that is joyful in the God of its salvation; that rejoices in Christ Jesus; is filled with joy and peace through believing in him, in his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; that has a comfortable view of his justification by his righteousness, of peace and pardon by his blood, of the atonement of his sins by his sacrifice; to whom he has said, “be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee”, (^{<4112>}Matthew 9:2); who has peace in him, though tribulation in the world: as such a man’s heart must be made glad, this will make his countenance cheerful, or cause him to lift up his head with joy; as it is in natural things, so it is in spiritual ones;

but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken; a man is dejected, his spirits sink, and it is seen in his countenance: there is a great sympathy between the body and mind, the one is much affected by the other; when the heart is full of sorrow, the animal spirits are low, the nerves are loosened, the whole frame, of nature is enfeebled, and the body emaciated; this is often the case through outward troubles^{f438}: physicians say^{f439} that grief weakens

the strength, and destroys the spirits, more than labour does. “The sorrow of the world worketh death”, (^{<4070>}2 Corinthians 7:10); and sometimes, through spiritual troubles, a sense of sin and guilt of it, a legal sorrow, which produces a legal contrition of spirit; and such “a wounded spirit who can bear?” (^{<3884>}Proverbs 18:14). This is the effect of a mere work of the law upon the conscience; and stands opposed to the spiritual joy, and the effects of it, the Gospel brings.

Ver. 14. *The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge,* etc.] He that has in his heart an understanding of divine and spiritual things, of the Gospel and of the truths of it, will seek earnestly and diligently in the use of proper means after more knowledge; as he will desire to know more of Christ, his person, offices, and grace, he will follow on to know him, and not be content with the present degree of knowledge he has attained unto; he will hear and read the word, and pray and meditate, in order to come to a more perfect knowledge of the son of God, and of those things which relate to his spiritual peace and eternal welfare;

but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness; on foolish talking and jesting; on foolish and unlearned questions; on foolish and false doctrines; on foolish and hurtful lusts; on wind and ashes, a deceived heart having turned them aside: they take pleasure and satisfaction in those things; feed their fancy with them and feast upon them, which shows what fools they are; and such all unregenerate men be.

Ver. 15. *All the days of the afflicted [are] evil,* etc.] And some are afflicted all their days, from their youth up; so that not only the days of old age are evil days, in which they have no pleasure, but even the days of their youth; all their days, as Jacob says, “few and evil have the days of the years of my life been”, (^{<0470>}Genesis 47:9); because they had been filled up with affliction and trouble of one sort or another. Or, “all the days of the poor”^{f440}; either in purse, who want many of the good things of life; or in knowledge, as Gersom and Aben Ezra observe;

but he that is of a merry heart [hath] a continual feast; a heart that has “the kingdom of God” in it, which lies “not [in] meat and drink, but [in] righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost”, (^{<5147>}Romans 14:17): which has the love of God shed abroad in it by the Spirit, where Christ dwells by faith; and that lives by faith on him, and on the provisions of his grace; all this is a constant continual feast to a gracious soul, made joyful hereby.

Ver. 16. *Better [is] little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.*] Not that a “little” is better than “much” of that which is good, as the things of this world are in themselves; poverty is not better than riches, simply considered; but as these are attended with different circumstances: if a man has but little of worldly substance, yet if he has “the fear of God” in his heart, and before his eyes; that fear which has God for its author and for its object, and which is itself a treasure; and may be here put for all grace, for the riches of grace saints are partakers of; such a man’s little is better than another man’s abundance without the fear of the Lord, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it: for such a man, though he has but little, which is the common portion of good men, yet he does not lack; he has enough, and is content; what he has he has with a blessing, and he enjoys it, and God in it, and has communion with him; and has also other bread to eat, the world knows nothing of: and particularly having the fear of God, the eye of God is upon him with pleasure; his heart is towards him, and sympathizes with him in all his troubles; his hand communicates unto him both temporal and spiritual meat, which is given to them that fear the Lord; his angels encamp about him, his power protects him; his secrets are with him, and inconceivable and inexpressible goodness is laid up for him: wherefore he is better off with his little, having the fear of God, than another with his great abundance and affluence, being destitute of it: and besides, having a great deal of “trouble” along with his treasure; trouble in amassing and getting it together; trouble in keeping it from being lost, or taken away by thieves and, robbers, for fear of which he cannot sleep; trouble through an insatiable desire of having more; he has no rest nor peace because he has not so much as he would have, or others have. Besides, he has what he has with curse; God sends upon him cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all he sets his hand to, (^{<630D>}Deuteronomy 28:2); where the same word is used as here: and he has it also with the cry of the poor; so some render the word, “a noise” or “tumult”,^{f441}; and interpret it of the cries and tears of those that are oppressed and injured; so Jarchi and Gersom; or, “with terror”,^{f442}, as some render it; with the terrors of a guilty conscience, with the fear of hell and everlasting damnation. Better have a little with a good conscience, than ever so much attended with such circumstances; it is not any man’s little, but the good man’s little, that is preferable to the wicked man’s much; (see ^{<4376>}Psalm 37:16).

Ver. 17. *Better [is] a dinner of herbs, where love is, etc.*] What Plautus^{f443} calls “asperam et terrestrem caenam”, “a harsh and earthly supper”, made

of what grows out of the earth; which is got without much cost or care, and dressed with little trouble; a traveller's dinner, as the word^{f444} signifies, and a poor one too to travel upon, such as is easily obtained, and presently cooked, and comes cheap. Now, where there are love and good nature in the host that prepares this dinner; or in a family that partakes of such an one, having no better; or among guests invited, who eat friendly together; or in the person that invites them, who receives them cheerfully, and heartily bids them welcome: such a dinner, with such circumstances, is better

than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith; than an ox kept up in the stall for fattening; or than a fatted one, which with the ancients was the principal in a grand entertainment; hence the allusion in (^{<424>}Matthew 22:4) (^{<2152>}Luke 15:23). In the times of Homer, an ox was in high esteem at their festivals; at the feasts made by his heroes, Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Ajax, an ox was a principal part of them, if not the whole; the back of a fat ox, or a sirloin of beef, was a favourite dish^{f445}. Indeed in some ages, both among Greeks and Romans, an ox was abstained from, through a superstitious regard to it, because so useful a creature in ploughing of the land; and it was carried so far as to suppose it to be as sinful to slay an ox as to kill a man^{f446}: and Aratus^{f447} represents it as not done, neither in the golden nor silver age, but that in the brasen age men first began to kill and eat oxen; but this is to be confuted by the laws of God, (^{<008>}Genesis 9:3 ^{<514>}Deuteronomy 14:4); and by the examples of Abraham and others. Now if there is hatred, either in the host, or in the guests among themselves, or in a family, it must stir up strifes and contentions, and render all enjoyments unpleasant and uncomfortable; (see ^{<370>}Proverbs 17:1 ^{<206>}Ecclesiastes 4:6); but where the love of God is, which is better than life, and the richest enjoyments of it; which sweetens every mercy, and cannot be purchased with money; and secures the best of blessings, the riches of grace and glory, and itself can never be lost; where this is, the meanest diet is preferable to the richest and most costly banquets of wicked men; who are hated and abhorred by the Lord, for their oppression and injustice, their luxury, or their covetousness; for poor men may be loved of God, and the rich be abhorred by him, (^{<910>}Psalms 10:4 ^{<2151>}Luke 15:19-23).

Ver. 18. *A wrathful man stirreth up strife*, etc.] A man of a wrathful disposition, of a furious spirit, of an angry temper; that is under the power and dominion of such a passion, and indulges it, and takes all opportunities to gratify it; he stirs up strife and contention where there was none, or

where it was laid; as a man stirs up coals of fire and raises a flame; (see ^{<AB21>}Proverbs 26:21). He stirs up strife in families, sets one relation against another, and the house in an uproar; he stirs up contentions in neighbourhoods, and sets one friend and neighbour against another, whence proceed quarrels and lawsuits: he stirs up strife in churches, breaks brotherly love, and causes animosities and divisions; he stirs up strife in kingdoms and states, whence come wars and fightings, confusion, and every evil work;

but [he that is] slow to anger appeaseth strife: a man of a quiet and peaceable disposition, possessed of the true grace of charity; who is not easily provoked, longsuffering, bears and endures all things; he allays the heat of anger; he quenches the coals of contention; he calms the storm and makes it quiet, as the word ^{f448} signifies; he

“mitigates strifes raised,”

as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; he composes differences, reconciles the parties at variance, and makes all hush and still; and so prevents the ill consequences of contention and strife.

Ver. 19. *The way of the slothful [man is] as an hedge of thorns,* etc.] Or, “strewed with thorns”, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; the Targum is,

“the ways of the slothful are briars and thorns.”

Either really being made so by his own conduct; who, by his slothfulness, has implicated and entangled himself in such difficulties, that he cannot extricate himself; his way is not passable, at least not very easily; it is as it were hedged up with thorns; (see ^{<AB6>}Hosea 2:6); or in his own apprehensions; who raises such difficulties about doing business, which to him seem insurmountable; at least which discourage him from attempting it, it being like breaking through thorns and briars; hence he will not plough because of the cold, nor go abroad because there is a lion in the streets, (^{<AB10>}Proverbs 20:4 22:13 26:13); or the way of his duty, especially of virtue and religion, is as troublesome and disagreeable to him as breaking through a thorn hedge, or treading upon briars and thorns; to attend the duties of public worship, prayer, and hearing the word, is very irksome to him; to be present at family worship, at prayer, and hearing the Scriptures or religious discourses read, is like sitting upon thorns unto him. This, as Aben Ezra

observes, is to be understood of a wicked man, as the opposition in the next clause shows;

but the way of the righteous [is] made plain: it is a castup way, as the word^{f449} signifies; a causeway, a highway, and a plain one, in which a truly righteous and good man finds no difficulty; yea, it is so plain, that men, though fools in other respects, shall not err therein, (^{<2808>}Isaiah 35:8); nor is it grievous and troublesome, but, on the contrary, very delightful, as the ways of Christ and wisdom are; his commandments are not grievous, his yoke is easy, and his paths pleasant; and the righteous man walks at liberty and with pleasure in them; and without offence or stumbling, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it.

Ver. 20. *A wise son maketh a glad father*, etc.] (See Gill on "^{<2008>}Proverbs 10:1");

but a foolish man despiseth his mother; that bore him and brought him up, and perhaps was too indulgent to him; which aggravates his sin and her sorrow; (see Gill on "^{<2008>}Proverbs 10:1"); or causes her to be despised by others, as Jarchi interprets it; such a man's sin, which is great folly, and shows him to be a foolish man, is highly resented by the Lord, and will be severely punished; (see ^{<2807>}Proverbs 30:17). The Targum is,

“a foolish son despises his mother;”

and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, which makes the antithesis more clear; and the Hebrew text designs one grown up to man's estate.

Ver. 21. *Folly [is] joy to [him that is] destitute of wisdom*, etc.] Or “that wants a heart”^{f450}, a wise and understanding one; by “folly” is meant sin, for all sin is folly; and that is very pleasing and joyous to a wicked he chooses it and delights in it; instead of being ashamed of it, and sorry for it, he glories in it, and makes his boast of it; and not only takes pleasure in committing it himself, but also in those that do it; (see ^{<2023>}Proverbs 10:23);

but a man of understanding walketh uprightly; he who has his understanding enlightened by the Spirit of God; who has an understanding given him by the Son of God; who has a spiritual and experimental understanding of the Gospel, and the truths of it: he walks according to the rule of the divine word; he walks as he has Christ for an example, and by faith on him; and after the spirit, and not after the flesh: or “directs himself

in walking”^{f451}, his goings, as the Vulgate Latin version, according to the above rule, example, and guidance, by the assistance of the spirit and grace of God; otherwise it is not in man that walketh of himself to direct his steps, (²⁴⁰²³Jeremiah 10:23).

Ver. 22. *Without counsel purposes are disappointed*, etc.] If a man determines and resolves upon a matter, and at once hastily and precipitately goes about it, without mature deliberation, without consulting with himself, and taking the advice of others in forming a scheme to bring about his designs, it generally comes to nothing; see (²⁴¹⁴⁸Luke 14:28-32); or “without a secret”^{f452} without keeping one; if a man divulges his intentions, it is much if they are not frustrated; so the Targum,

“vain are the thoughts (or designs) where there is no secret;”

if a man makes no secret of what he designs to do, he is easily counterworked, and his purposes disappointed;

but in the multitude of counsellors they are established; his purposes are, as in (²⁴⁰⁰⁸Proverbs 20:18); having the advice of others, and these many, he is confirmed that he is right in what he has thought of and purposed to do; and therefore goes about it with the greater spirit and cheerfulness, and is most likely to succeed, and generally does; see (²⁴⁰¹⁴Proverbs 11:14).

Ver. 23. *A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth*, etc.] When his advice is asked, and he gives good and wholesome counsel, and that being taken succeeds; it is a pleasure to a man that he is capable of assisting his friend, and doing him service, or a common good, whether it be in things natural, civil, or religious; when his speech is with salt, seasoned with grace, and he knows how he ought to answer every man; when that which is good proceeds from him, and is to the use of edifying, and ministers grace to the hearers, and is acceptable to them; when with readiness he gives an answer to every man that asks him a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear, (⁵⁰⁰⁶Colossians 3:6) (⁴⁰⁰⁹Ephesians 4:29 ⁴⁰¹⁵1 Peter 3:15);

and a word [spoken] in due season, how good [is it]? whether by way of advice and counsel to such who stand in need of it, or of exhortation and instruction to those that want it, or of comfort to those that are distressed; such is a word of promise spoken and applied by the Spirit of God to the hearts of his people in a time of need; and such is the Gospel of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, as spoken by Christ and his ministers

to weary and wounded souls; it cannot be well and fully expressed how sweet, how good, how suitable, as well as seasonable, it is: (see ~~<1251>~~Proverbs 25:11 ~~<2804>~~Isaiah 50:4).

Ver. 24. *The way of life [is] above to the wise*, etc.] Of “the way of life”; (see Gill on “~~<2007>~~Proverbs 10:17”); this is said to be “above”, or it tends “to [what is] above”; it leads to heaven and happiness above; the life itself it is the way of or to is above, it is hid with Christ in God; eternal life, glory, and happiness, is above; it is a house eternal in the heavens, an inheritance reserved there, and will be there enjoyed by the saints: the way to it is above; Christ is the way, and he is in heaven, at the Father’s right hand, through whom only men can come at this life; wherefore those who are in the way of it have their thoughts, their hearts, their affections and conversations, above, (~~<4162>~~Matthew 6:21 ~~<5106>~~Colossians 3:1,2 ~~<5109>~~Philippians 3:20). Faith, which deals with Christ the way, and by which men walk in him, is signified by soaring aloft, mounting up with wings as eagles, by entering within the veil, and dwelling on high, and by looking upwards, and at things unseen, and being the evidence of them. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, “the way of life is above the learned man”, or wise man; the man that has no other than natural learning and wisdom, this way of life and salvation by Christ lies out of his knowledge; it is what the most sagacious and penetrating man could never discover; it is hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes; or this is only known to such who are truly wise unto salvation; it is plain to them, and they highly esteem it, and choose to walk in it; it is an “ascent to him that understands”, as the Syriac version renders it; it is a going up hill, it is an ascending upwards and heavenwards; such a man is continually looking upwards unto Christ, the author and finisher of his faith; pressing towards him, the mark for the prize; keeping his eye, not on things on earth, things temporal, which are seen here below, but on things above, things unseen, which are eternal in the heavens;

that he may depart from hell beneath; not from the grave, as “sheol” sometimes signifies: for wise men die as well as fools, and come to the grave, which is the house appointed for all living; even those who are in the way of life that is above do not escape death and the grave: but such are secured from everlasting ruin and destruction, from being destroyed soul and body in hell; they steer quite a different course and road from that; every step they take upwards carries them so far off from hell; which is the contrary way; the broad road of sin is the lower way, or what leads to hell

and destruction beneath; the narrow way of faith in Christ is the upper way, and that leads to eternal life above.

Ver. 25. *The Lord will destroy the house of the proud*, etc.] To whom he has the utmost aversion; he sets himself against them and resists them, and will not only destroy them, but their stately houses too, which their have fancied shall continue for ever; and also their families, their children and posterity; these shall be as stubble, and shall be burnt up in his wrath, and neither root nor branch left. Moreover, the man of sin, the son of perdition, may be more especially intended, that exalts himself above all that is called God, with all the sons of pride supported by him; his house, which is the house of the foolish and adulterous woman, the idolatrous church of Rome, shall be rooted up; the city of Rome, the seat of the beast itself, where his house or palace is, shall be destroyed, and all that belong unto him, even all they that have destroyed the earth, (^{611B} Revelation 11:18);

but he will establish the border of the widow; whose advocate, judge, and defender he is; when men, rich, proud, and oppressive, attempt to remove the landmark of the widow's border, and so lessen her land and enlarge their own, God will not suffer it to be done, but will establish it in its place; that is, such who are weak and helpless, as widows are, and cannot defend themselves and their property, he will protect them and secure it for them. So the church of Christ, during the reign of antichrist, being obliged to flee into the wilderness, looks like a widow deprived of her husband, and has but "little strength" to support and defend herself, as is said of the church of Philadelphia, (^{611B} Revelation 3:8); yet the Lord will secure and preserve her, and firmly settle and establish her, yea, enlarge her borders, and make them of pleasant stones; spread the kingdom of Christ from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. Frequent mention is made of the establishing of the church in the latter day, (^{611B} Psalm 48:8 87:5) (^{611B} Isaiah 2:2).

Ver. 26. *The thoughts of the wicked [are] an abomination to the Lord*, etc.] They are known unto the Lord, who is the searcher of the heart, and a discernor of the thoughts and intents of it; he knows they are vain and sinful, yea, that they are only evil, and that continually, and therefore are hateful and abominable to him; it may be rendered "the thoughts of evil", as by the Targum; or evil thoughts, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions; but Aben Ezra interprets as we, the thoughts of a wicked man, which are never otherwise but evil; whereas in a good man,

though there are many evil thoughts which are abominable to himself, yet there are some good thoughts, and which are pleasing to the Lord, as follows;

but [the words] of the pure [are] pleasant words; that is, unto the Lord; which are the same with their thoughts, and are the effect of them, and so stand opposed to the thoughts of the wicked; these, expressed either in a way of prayer or of praise, are sweet and pleasant, and acceptable unto God through Christ; as likewise their words and discourse in religious conversation, which also minister grace unto the hearer, and are very delightful and pleasing to saints; the words may be supplied thus, “but [the thoughts] of the pure”, of such who are pure in heart, whose hearts are purified by faith in the blood of Christ, are “words of pleasantness”, so Gersom; there is a language in thought which is known to a man’s self, and by the Lord; there is the meditation or discourse of the heart, and this being about divine and spiritual things is pleasing to God; he hearkens to it, and writes a book of remembrance for them that fear him, and have thought on his name; (see ^{<1914>}Psalm 19:14 ^{<3116>}Malachi 3:16).

Ver. 27. *He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house*, etc.] Or “that covets a covetousness”,^{f453} an evil one, as in (^{<3111>}Habakkuk 2:9); that seeks riches by unlawful means, that gathers the mammon of falsehood, or unrighteousness, as the Targum; he entails a curse and brings ruin and destruction upon his family; the Septuagint and Arabic versions are, he “destroys himself”; or “his own soul”, as the Syriac version; it may be understood of a man that is over anxious and eager to be rich, and hurries on business, and gives his servants no proper time for food and rest; (see Gill on “^{<3112>}Proverbs 11:29”);

but he that hateth gifts shall live; that rejects them with abhorrence, when offered to bribe him to pervert judgment, or to do an unjust thing; otherwise gifts may be lawfully received from one friend by another; the sin is when they are given and taken for the sake of doing what is base and sinful; and a man that shakes his hand from receiving gifts on such a basis, he and his family shall prosper and increase in worldly things; and, doing this from a right principle of grace, shall live comfortably in a spiritual sense, and thrive and flourish in his soul, and live an eternal life hereafter; (see ^{<1915>}Psalm 16:5,6).

Ver. 28. *The heart of the righteous studieth to answer*, etc.] He thinks before he speaks, meditates what he shall say, what answer to give to men;

whether in things civil, natural, or religious; and what to return to the Lord when he is reproved by him; or what to say in prayer to him, or by way of thankfulness for mercies received from him; see (^{<2186>}Proverbs 3:6 ^{<3101>}Habakkuk 2:1); though our Lord advises his disciples, when summoned before their persecutors, not to meditate beforehand what they should answer, since they should have immediate assistance, (^{<2214>}Luke 21:14); but this was in extraordinary cases; in common ones the observation of the wise man should be attended to. A Jewish^{f454} writer renders the words, “the heart of the righteous meditates wormwood”, or bitter things; see (^{<2184>}Proverbs 5:4); as the judgment of God, death, and hell; this sense is mentioned by Aben Ezra, but rejected;

but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things; without any previous thought and consideration, without fear or wit; in great abundance, as water out of a fountain; thus an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil things readily and at once, having no concern about the consequences of things, (^{<4125>}Matthew 12:25); (see Gill on “^{<2152>}Proverbs 15:2”).

Ver. 29. *The Lord [is] far from the wicked*, etc.] Not as to his essence or powerful presence, which is everywhere, for he is God omnipresent; but with respect to his favour and good will, he is far from helping in distress, and from hearing their cries when they apply unto him in desperate circumstances; nor does he admit them to nearness and communion with him now, as he does the righteous; nor will he receive them to himself at the last day, but bid them depart from him; they are far from him and from his law, and from all righteousness; and he is far from them, and keeps them at a distance from him;

but he heareth the prayer of the righteous; they draw nigh to him, and he draws nigh to them; he is nigh to all that call upon him in truth; and there is none like them that has God so nigh them as they have; his eyes are upon them, and his ears are open to their cries; he is a God hearing and answering their prayers, and bestows upon them the favours they ask for, and stand in need of.

Ver. 30. *The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart*, etc.] Not so much the visive power, the faculty of seeing, a strong and clear eyesight; though this is a great mercy, and from the Lord, and to be prized, and does give joy of heart; but rather the objects seen by the light of the eyes, as Jarchi; as green gardens, flowing rivers, pleasant meadows, rising hills, lowly vales, herbs,

plants, trees, birds, beasts, and creatures of every kind; nor is the eye ever satisfied with seeing; especially light itself beheld rejoiceth the heart, and particularly that grand luminary and fountain of light, the sun. “Light is sweet”, says the wise man, (^{<21107>}Ecclesiastes 11:7), “and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun”, which is a proper comment on this text: and much more pleasant and delightful, cheering and rejoicing, must be the spiritual light of the eyes of the understanding, when opened by the Spirit of God at conversion; it is marvellous light souls are then called into, and wonderful things do they then behold, which rejoice their hearts; as Christ the sun of righteousness himself, the light of the world, the glories of his person and office, the fulness of grace that is in him, pardon of sin by his blood, justification by his righteousness, and free and full salvation through him for the worst and chief of sinners: in the light which is thrown into them they see light; the light of God’s countenance, his face and favour, which put gladness into them; the light of the divine word, and the precious truths of it; yea, the light, joy, and happiness of the world to come, in the hope of which their hearts rejoice. Jarchi mystically interprets this of the light of the eyes in the law; but it is much better to understand it of the light of the eyes in the Gospel, and the mysteries of it;

[and] a good report maketh the bones fat; or “a good hearing”^{f455}; not the sense of hearing, or a quick exercise of that, though a very great blessing; but things heard. Some understand this of a good or “fame”^{f456}, which is sometimes the sense of the phrase; either a good report which a man hears of himself, which makes his spirit cheerful; and this affects his body and the juices of it, which fill his bones with marrow, and cover them with fatness; or which he hears of his friends, and is pleasing to him, as it was to the Apostle John that Demetrius had a good report of all men, (^{<6012>}3 John 1:12). But rather this is to be understood of the good news, or good hearing, from a far country, as the same phrase is rendered in (^{<2125>}Proverbs 25:25); and here in the Arabic version is so translated, even the Gospel, which is a report; see (^{<2501>}Isaiah 53:1 ^{<5106>}Romans 10:16); a report concerning God, the perfections of his nature, the purposes of his heart, the covenant of his grace, his love, grace, and mercy towards men in Christ Jesus; a “report” concerning Christ, concerning his person and offices, concerning his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death; concerning his resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of God, intercession for his people, and second coming to judgment; and concerning salvation, peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by him; a report concerning the

good land, the heavenly Canaan, and the glories of it, the way unto it, and the persons that shall possess it: and this is a “good” report; it is good tidings of good things, a report of good things laid up in covenant, which are come by Christ the great High Priest, which saints are interested in, and shall partake of here and hereafter; it is a true report, and to be believed, since it is made by God himself, by Jesus Christ the faithful witness, and by the apostles of Christ, who were eye and ear witnesses of the things they reported; and such a report being heard, received, and embraced, greatly contributes to the spiritual health and prosperity of the children of God, it makes them fat and flourishing; such pleasant words are as the honeycomb, sweet to the soul, make glad the heart, and are marrow and health to the bones; (see ⁴¹⁸⁸Proverbs 3:8 12:25 16:24).

Ver. 31. *The ear that heareth the reproof of life*, etc.] That is given according to the word of life, in a warm, fervent, and lively manner, with zeal, and in good earnest; which reproves the life of another by his own, as well as by words; and which tends to the spiritual and eternal life of the person reprov'd; being taken, a man that diligently hearkens to, kindly and cordially receives, and cheerfully obeys such reproof given him,

abideth among the wise; he not only chooseth to be among them, that he may have the advantage of their wise counsels and reproofs, but he becomes wise himself thereby, and attains to the character of a wise man, and is numbered among them; such a man abides in the house of wisdom, the church of God, and attends upon and has conversation with the wise dispensers of the word, and shall have a part with them in the church above, in the kingdom of heaven, where the wise will shine as the firmament; the word here used does not denote a lodging for a night, as it sometimes signifies, but a perpetual abiding.

Ver. 32. *He that refuseth instruction*, etc.] The instruction of parents, masters, ministers, and of God himself; or “correction”^{f457}, instruction either by the word or by the rod; he that withdraws himself from it, will not be in the way of it, that shuns, neglects, and despises it, or carelessly and contemptuously attends it:

despiseth his own soul; shows that he makes no account of it, has no regard for it or care about it, when it is so precious a jewel, and the loss of it irreparable; not that a man can strictly and properly despise his soul, but comparatively, having a greater regard for his body, and especially for his

carnal lusts and pleasures, than for that; or as a man diseased and refuses proper medicines may be said to despise his health;

but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding; or “a heart”^{f458}; he gets understanding by listening to reproof, and behaving according to it; he better understands himself and his case, what he should shun and avoid, what he should receive, embrace, and do; instead of losing his soul, as the man that refuses correction does, he finds the life of it, and possesses it, and with it a large share of experience and spiritual wisdom.

Ver. 33. *The fear of the Lord [is] the instruction of wisdom*, etc.] It is “the beginning of wisdom”, (^{<2090>}Proverbs 9:10); it leads unto it, instructs a man in it; by means of it he attains to true spiritual and evangelical wisdom; it teaches him to abstain from sin, and to serve the Lord; and to seek the salvation of his soul in the way God has appointed, which is by his Son Jesus Christ, which to do is the highest wisdom;

and before honour [is] humility; the fear of God and humility go together, where the one is the other is; and as the one is the way to wisdom, the other is the way to glory; Christ’s humiliation was before his exaltation; men are first humbled and laid low in their own eyes, and then they are raised out of their low estate, and are set among princes; and shall inherit the throne of glory, being made kings and priests unto God; it is a frequent saying of Christ’s, “he that humbleth himself shall be exalted”, (^{<2141>}Luke 14:11); such an one is raised to a high estate of grace, and at last to eternal glory.

CHAPTER 16

Ver. 1. *The preparations of the heart in man*, etc.] The sense of these words, according to our version, depends upon the next clause, and the meaning of the whole is, that a man can neither think nor speak without God: the “orderings” or “marshallings of the heart”^{f459}, as it may be rendered; that is, of the thoughts of the heart, which are generally irregular and confused; the ranging them in order, as an army in battle array, or as things regularly placed on a well furnished table; the fixing them on any particular subject, though about things civil and natural, so as closely to attend to them, and proceed in a regular manner in the consideration of them, are not without the concurrence of divine Providence: and whereas the thoughts of men’s hearts are evil, and that continually, and nothing but evil thoughts naturally proceed from thence; the ordering and marshalling of them, and fixing them to the attention and consideration of divine and spiritual things, are not without the supernatural grace of God; for we cannot think a good thought of ourselves, nor indeed anything of ourselves in a spiritual manner, (~~408~~2 Corinthians 3:5); all preparations for religious service and duty, whether it be to pray unto God, or to preach in his name, are from the Lord; it is he that works in men both “to will and to do”; that gives them the willing mind, or a suitable frame for service, as well as ability to perform it; that pours out the Spirit of grace and supplication on them, and disposes and directs their minds to proper petitions, and furnishes his ministering servants in their studies with agreeable matter for their ministrations, (~~407~~Psalm 10:17 ~~408~~2 Corinthians 3:5,6);

and the answer of the tongue [is] from the Lord; who made man’s mouth, and teaches him what to say, both before God and man; what he shall say in prayer to him, or in preaching to others; for the “door of utterance” in either service is from him, as well as the preparation for it: most versions and interpreters make these clauses distinct, the one as belonging to men, the other to God; thus, “to men [belong] the preparations of the heart, but from the Lord is the answer” or “[speech] of the tongue”; the former is said by way of concession, and according to the opinion of men; and the sense may be, be it so, that man has the marshalling and ordering of his own thoughts, and that he can lay things together in his mind, and think pertinently and properly on a subject, and is capable of preparing matter for a discourse; yet it is as easy to observe, that men can better form ideas of

things in their minds, the they can express their sense and meaning; and though they may be ever so well prepared to speak, yet they are not able to do it, unless the Lord gives them utterance, and assists their memories; they lose what they had prepared, or deliver it in a disorderly and confused manner, and sometimes think to say one thing, and say another; their tongues are overruled by the Lord to say what they never intended, as in the cases of Balaam and Caiaphas. The Targum is,

“from man is the counsel of the heart, and from the Lord is the speech of the tongue.”

Ver. 2. *All the ways of a man [are] clean in his own eyes*, etc.] All right and well, not only some, but all, having a high opinion of himself; for this is to be understood of a self-righteous man, who is pure in his own eyes, though not cleansed from his filthiness, and so fancies every way he walks in, and everything he does, is pure; this is owing to want of knowledge of the impurity of his nature; was he sensible of this, he would see that his best righteousness is as filthy rags and to his ignorance of the spirituality of the law, which, was he acquainted with, he would find, on comparing himself with it, that he and all he did was polluted and unclean: some read the words, “all the ways of a pure man [are] before his eyes”: the eyes of the Lord, he sees them, and approves of them; so Aben Ezra; and to this agrees the Septuagint version, “all the works of an humble man [are] manifest with God”; and the Arabic version, “all the works of an humble man are clean before God”; but the former reading and sense seem best;

but the Lord weigheth the spirits; searches and tries the hearts; he sees, knows, and observes the principles of all actions, and can as exactly adjust the nature and quality of them, as a man, with a pair of scales in his hands, can tell precisely the weight of anything put into them; the Lord weighs the spirits, or hearts, from whence all actions flow, by his omniscience, and accordingly judges of them by that, and not by the outward appearance; and he weighs all actions by his law, in the balance of the sanctuary, where they are found wanting, and come greatly short of that purity and perfection pharisaical persons imagine there is in them.

Ver. 3. *Commit thy works unto the Lord*, etc.] Natural, civil, or religious; seek to him for strength and assistance in all, and leave the success of all with him: or “roll thy works on” or “unto the Lord”^{f460}; devolve all upon him, cast all care upon him and his providence for supply, support, and sustenance in life; and commit the business of the salvation of thy soul, and

the important affairs of it, wholly to him, who is able, willing, and faithful, to keep what is committed to him; and, having so done, may sit down easy and satisfied, as one that is rid of a burden by casting it on another, better able to bear it, or more equal to the work committed to him: the Targum is, “reveal thy works to God”; and so the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions, “reveal thy works to the Lord”; thy case, condition, and circumstances; thy wants and necessities; seek and ask for a supply of him, make known thy requests to him; for though he is not ignorant of the affairs of his people, yet he will be sought unto to do the things for them he intends to do, and they stand in need of;

and thy thoughts shall be established; when a man has, by faith and in prayer, committed himself, his case, his ways and works, to the Lord, his mind is made easy, his thoughts are composed and settled, and he quietly waits the issues of things; he says, the will of the Lord be done; he knows that he causes all things to work together for good; and whatever is for his good and God’s glory shall be brought to pass; and this makes him calm, sedate, and easy; and he is in a fair way of having his designs, desires, and endeavours accomplished; (see ¹⁸⁷⁶Psalm 37:5).

Ver. 4. *The Lord hath made all [things] for himself*, etc.] This is true of the Lord with respect to the creation of all things by him. All things are made by him, the heaven, earth, and sea; and all that are in them, angels, men, beasts, birds, fishes, and all creatures: and these are made for himself, and not another; not for the pure or good men, as Aben Ezra, though all things are for the elect’s sake; but for God himself, besides whom there was no other before the creation, nor is there any other God but him, who is the first cause and last end of all things: nor were those all things made for him, through any want he had of them, being God all sufficient and blessed for evermore, but to show his greatness, and communicate his goodness; they are made for his service, which all creatures are obliged unto, and whom all in their way obey, and for his honour and glory. It is also true of his works of providence, and of his ordering and disposing of all things in the course of that, to answer ends of his own glory; his kingdom of providence rules over all; there is a general providence, which respects all creatures and things; and there is a particular providence attending the Lord’s own people; and in all the glory of his wisdom, justice, truth, and goodness, is conspicuous: but this is chiefly, if not solely, to be understood of God’s decrees and purposes; and of his ordering and appointing all things to bring about his own glory. Every thing is appointed

of God; he has foreordained whatever comes to pass; there is a purpose for everything under the heavens, and a time fixed for the execution of it. Junius restrains it to “all men”; but it is true of all creatures and things, though especially men: all things are appointed by the Lord, respecting the temporal estate of men; their birth, and the time of it, with all the circumstances attending it; the place of their abode, their calling, station of life, and usefulness; all adverse and prosperous dispensations; their death, with all the events leading to it: and so likewise all things respecting their spiritual and eternal estate; the choice of them to salvation; their redemption by Christ; the time of his coming, sufferings, and death, and the circumstances thereof; the conversion of God’s elect, the time, place, and means; these are all according to the purpose of God; as are also all their times of affliction, temptation, desertion, and of joy and comfort. In a word, the final state of all men, good and bad, is fixed by the Lord; and all this is “for himself”, which some render, “to answer to himself”^{f461}; all creatures are made to answer to his original design in making them, to the laws of their creation, and to answer his ends and purposes; and which is ultimately his own glory: or for his praise, as Jarchi; for his will and pleasure, as R. Isaac; for the thing in which he is well pleased, as R. Jonah or for his own sake, as Kimchi; and all which agree, as with the sense of the words, so with (☩) Revelation 4:11). The Targum and Syriac version very wrongly render them,

“all the works of God, or the Lord, are for them that obey him;”

yea, even the wicked for the day of evil; this is added to illustrate the general proposition in the preceding clause, and to obviate an objection, that might be taken from the destruction of the wicked, against all things being for the glory of God; for even the destruction of the wicked, which is under a divine appointment, is for his glory. It is not the sense of this text, nor of any other passage of Scripture, that God made man to damn him; nor is this to be inferred from the doctrine of predestination: God made man, neither to damn him, nor to save him, but for his own glory; and that is secured, whether in his salvation or damnation; nor did or does God make men wicked; he made man upright, and he has made himself wicked; and, being so, God may justly appoint him to damnation for his wickedness, in doing which he glorifies his justice. “The day of evil”, or “evil day”, is the day of wrath and ruin, unto which wicked men are reserved by the appointment of God, agreeably to the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. This is true of wicked angels, wicked men, and

particularly of that wicked one, the man of sin and son of perdition, antichrist; the word here used is in the singular number.

Ver. 5. *Every one [that is] proud in heart [is] an abomination to the Lord*, etc.] Though he may dissemble his pride, and not discover it in his looks, by his words and gestures; yet the Lord sees and knows the heart, the naughtiness of it, and the pride that is in it: and only a proud look, but a proud heart, is abominable to him: everyone that is so arrogant as to arraign the decrees of God, and quarrel with him about them, to whom the apostle says, “Nay, but, O man”, O proud vain man, “who art thou, that repliest against God?” (^{<609>}Romans 9:19-21); every proud Pharisee, that trusts in himself that he is righteous, and despises others, that justifies himself before men, is an abomination in the sight of God, (^{<289>}Luke 18:9 16:15); particularly antichrist, who has not only a proud look, a look more stout than his fellows, but a proud heart; exalts himself above all that is called God; and not only speaks big words against the most High, but has it in his heart to change times and laws; and proudly imagines he shall always continue in his grandeur and prosperity, (^{<2025>}Daniel 7:25 ^{<3004-2>}Thessalonians 2:4 ^{<6807>}Revelation 18:7);

[though] hand [join] in hand, he shall not be unpunished; though he endeavours with both hands, with all his might and main, to secure himself and prevent his ruin, he shall not be able to do it; though he enters into confederacy with, and calls in the kings of the earth to his assistance, it will be of no avail, both he and they shall be destroyed; or out of hand, immediately, his destruction will come upon him, (^{<664>}Revelation 16:14,16 18:8 19:19-21); (see Gill on “^{<2012>}Proverbs 11:21”); The Targum is,

“from evil he shall not be cleared;”

and the Syriac version,

“he that stretcheth out his hand against his neighbour shall not be cleared from evil.”

Ver. 6. *By mercy and truth iniquity is purged*, etc.] Or “expiated”^{f462}, and atoned for: not by the mercy and truth of men; not by alms deeds or showing mercy to the poor; nor by speaking truth and keeping promises, and doing justice between man and man; for, though these are duties to be performed, they will not atone for sin; and may be done by persons destitute of the grace of God, and whose iniquities are not purged or pardoned: but by the mercy and truth of God; through his “mercy”, in

sending Christ to be the propitiation for sin; and through his “truth”, in fulfilling his promises concerning Christ; and particularly concerning pardon on the foot of his sacrifice and satisfaction, where mercy and truth have met together: or through the grace and truth come by Jesus Christ; or through his atoning sacrifice, by which he has finished transgression, made an end of sin, and made reconciliation for iniquity; in which there is a rich display of his own and of his father’s grace and mercy, truth and faithfulness;

and by the fear of the Lord [men] depart from evil; having that put into their hearts, and excited and influenced by the grace and goodness of God, men are engaged to abstain from evil, and the appearance of it; it teaches them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly and godly in this world.

Ver. 7. *When a man’s ways please the Lord*, etc.] As they do when a man walks according to the rule of his word; when he walks as he has Christ for an example; when he walks after the Spirit, and not after the flesh; when he walks by faith, and does all he does in faith; without which it is impossible to please God, (³¹⁰⁶Hebrews 11:6); and when all his ways and actions are directed to the glory of God;

he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him; as Abimelech with Isaac, Esau with Jacob; and the enemies of the church and people of God with them, in the latter day, (⁴⁰³⁹Revelation 3:9).

Ver. 8. *Better [is] a little with righteousness*, etc.] Gotten in a righteous way, held by a righteous claim, used in a righteous manner, attended with a life of righteousness and holiness; and also along with an interest in the righteousness of Christ, which renders acceptable unto God, yields peace and comfort, and entitles to eternal glory and happiness. A truly righteous man may have but little of this world’s goods; but his small pittance is better

than great revenues without right; obtained in an unjust way; detained from the right owner of them, and used in an unrighteous manner, in a course of sin and wickedness: or, “without judgment”^{f463}; how to make use of them aright, and without a righteousness that will justify them at the day of judgment; (see Gill on “²¹⁵⁶Proverbs 15:16”). A little the true church of Christ enjoys in the wilderness; having Christ and his grace, Christ and his righteousness, is better than all the revenues of the church of Rome gotten

by the unlawful methods they are; and which, in one hour will come to nought, (^{f6817}Revelation 18:17).

Ver. 9. *A man's heart deviseth his way*, etc.] This is to be understood, not of a wicked man, in whose heart is frowardness, and who devises mischief and evil imaginations continually, (²¹⁶⁴⁸Proverbs 6:14,18); for such are an abomination to the Lord; nor will he direct their goings, or prosper and succeed them in their ways: but of a good man, or righteous man, as Aben Ezra; who thinks of the way in which he should go, and desires to walk in a right way, as Jarchi; and who is influenced by the Spirit and grace of God to think and act in this manner; for otherwise the way of man is not in himself; it is not of his own devising and finding out; nor is his disposition to walk in it of himself; and it is only such a man, a good man, whose steps are ordered by the Lord, as follows; see (²⁴¹¹³Jeremiah 10:23 ⁴⁸⁷²³Psalms 37:23);

but the Lord directeth his steps: to go right on, and not turn to the right hand or the left; and to walk safely and surely, through a variety of troubles and difficulties, to his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 10. *A divine sentence [is] in the lips of the king*, etc.] Or “divination”^{f464}, as the word signifies; or what is like to divination, as Aben Ezra and Gersom interpret it^{f465}. What he says is as an oracle, and should be strictly true. Some understand it of the sagacity and penetration of kings, as was in Solomon, and appeared in his judging the two harlots; but such is not to be found in kings in common: rather therefore this expresses and designs what should be, and not what is, in kings. These, as the kings of Israel, ought to have the book of God before them, and read in it, and judge and pronounce sentence in every case according to it; they should speak as the oracles of God; and, when they do, a divine sentence may be said to be in their lips. But it is best to understand this of the King of kings, of the King Messiah; into whose lips grace is poured, and from whence none but words of wisdom, grace, and truth, flow; who taught the way of God in truth; who had the word of God in his heart and in his month continually; and on whom the Spirit of wisdom without measure dwelt; and is the wisdom and word of God, as well as the power of God;

his mouth transgresseth not in judgment; this cannot be said of any earthly king; they ought not indeed to transgress in judgment with their mouths, but it is notorious that they too often do: could this be applied to kings in common, they would have a better claim to infallibility than the pope of

Rome has. But this is true of Christ, the King of saints; who is a King that reigns in righteousness, and decrees judgment; sits upon his throne, to order and establish it with judgment: nor does his mouth ever transgress in judgment, or ever say, or he do, a wrong thing; his sceptre is a sceptre of righteousness.

Ver. 11. *A just weight and balance [are] the Lord's*, etc.] These are of his devising; what he has put into the heart, of men to contrive and make use of, for the benefit of mankind, for the keeping and maintaining truth and justice in commercial affairs; these are of his appointing, commanding, and approving, (^{<B985>}Leviticus 19:35,36);

all the weights of the bag [are] his work; or, “all the stones”^{f466}; greater or smaller, which were formerly used in weighing, and were kept in a bag for that purpose; these are by the Lord's appointment and order. This may be applied to the Scriptures of truth, which are of God; are the balance of the sanctuary, in which every doctrine is to be weighed and tried; what agrees with them is to be received, and what is found wanting is to be rejected. The Targum is,

“his works, all of them, are weights of truth.”

Ver. 12. *[It is] an abomination to kings to commit wickedness*, etc.] The Targum is,

“the abomination of kings are they that work wickedness.”

It should be an abomination to kings to commit wickedness themselves, and those that do it should be abhorred by them, or they should show their resentment at it by removing them from their presence, or by punishing them: and though there have been such kings as David, (^{<B910>}Psalm 101:4,7); yet there are but few such; this is not true of kings in common; and therefore rather expresses what they should be than what they are; but is perfectly applicable to Christ, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, (^{<B907>}Psalm 45:7);

for the throne is established by righteousness; this is the support, strength, and security of every kingdom, and of the thrones of kings; and it is with judgment and righteousness that the throne of Christ is established; yea, justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne, (^{<B907>}Isaiah 9:7 ^{<B914>}Psalm 89:14).

Ver. 13. *Righteous lips [are] the delight of kings*, etc.] Such that speak truth and righteousness, and advise to the administration of justice and judgment, and to do that which is most for their own true honour and the people's good, are, or ought to be, highly valued and esteemed by kings: but the contrary is too often the case; kings hearken to those that speak lies, that flatter them, and gratify their pride, ambition, and love of power, to the hurt of their subjects;

and they love him that speaketh right: agreeably to right reason; which makes for the honour of kings, and the good of those over whom they rule. Christ loves and delights in those that deliver out his doctrines in the taught words of the Holy Ghost, without any mixture or corruption; that explain, inculcate, and enforce his laws and commands; and faithfully declare the whole counsel of God, both with respect to faith and practice; all which is for his glory, as King of saints, and to the profit and advantage of those who submit to the sceptre of his kingdom.

Ver. 14. *The wrath of a king [is as] messengers of death*, etc.] Or, "angels of death", as the Targum. As the wrath of Ahasuerus was to Haman; when it is either discovered in the countenance of a king, or expressed by his words, or signified by a messenger; it sometimes has been immediate death to a person, and often as terrible as if a messenger brought the sentence of death; yea, it is as if one messenger after another was sent on such an errand, and therefore the word is in the plural number. How terrible is the wrath of the King of kings; and even to kings themselves, who are represented as flying to rocks and mountains to hide them from it! (~~6:15~~ Revelation 6:15-17);

but a wise man will pacify it; by a proper acknowledgment of the offence committed; or by a prudent representation of his case, or the case of his friends; by soft answers and strong arguments, as Jonathan pacified the wrath of King Saul his father against David. He is a wise man that believes in Christ, and pleads his propitiatory sacrifice for the expiation of his sin, at the same time frankly acknowledging it.

Ver. 15. *In the light of the king's countenance [is] life*, etc.] When he looks with a pleasant smiling countenance on a person that has been under his displeasure, and especially if under a sentence of death, it is as life from the dead: so the light of the countenance of God, the King of kings; the discoveries of his love, the manifestations of himself, his gracious presence, communion with him, the comforts of his Spirit, the joys of his salvation,

are life unto his people, invigorate their graces, quicken their souls, and make them cheerful; see (^{<3816>}Psalm 30:5 4:6,7). And how delightful and pleasant is the countenance of Christ; which is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; and is as the sun when it shineth in its strength; and who himself is the sun of righteousness, that arises on his people with healing in his wings! How reviving his love! how comfortable fellowship with him! his absence is as death, his presence gives life;

and his favour [is] as a cloud of the latter rain: which falling a little before harvest, as was usual in Judea, revived the corn and filled it: and such is the favour of God in Christ, which is free, distinguishing, and undeserved, as rain is; the objects of it are very unworthy; and it is given often unasked for, as well as undeserved, in great abundance, and causes great cheerfulness and fruitfulness: and such is the layout of Christ, in coming into the world in the last days to save sinners his coming is said to be as the former and the latter rain, (^{<2018>}Hosea 6:3). He came from heaven, as that does; is the free gift of God, as that is; is in consequence of a decree, as that; and came suddenly, and with great acceptance to those, who knew him and waited for him; and his spiritual coming unto his people, and the discoveries of his love and free favour to them, are very reviving, cheering, and refreshing; (see ^{<3716>}Psalm 72:6).

Ver. 16. *How much better [is it] to get wisdom than gold?* etc.] To obtain and possess Christ, the fountain of wisdom, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which treasures are infinitely preferable to thousands of gold and silver; to gain the knowledge of him, and of God in him, with which eternal life is connected, and in comparison of which all things are loss and dung; to have wisdom in the hidden part, or grace in the heart, which is much more precious than gold that perisheth; to have a spiritual experimental knowledge of the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are more to be desired than gold, yea, than fine gold; all which are to be got by diligent search and inquiry, by prayer and asking for, and to be had or bought without money and without price; and the getting of them is above all other gettings; such wisdom is more valuable in itself, has a greater intrinsic worth in it than gold; it is more profitable and useful, more solid and satisfying; it is not only better, but it is abundantly better, it is inexpressibly so; it cannot be well said how much better it is, and therefore it is put by way of question and admiration; see (^{<2113>}Proverbs 3:13-15 4:7);

and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver? the same thing is designed as before, expressed in different words; a spiritual understanding of Christ and the Gospel, and an experience of the grace of God; though some, as Gersom, think that wisdom is something better than understanding, as gold, to which it is preferred, is better than silver. The Septuagint render it,

“nests of wisdom, and nests of understanding;”

and the Arabic version,

“buds of wisdom, and buds of understanding.”

Ver. 17. *The highway of the upright [is] to depart from evil,* etc.] Upright persons, such who are upright in heart, and walk uprightly; these walk in the highway of holiness, in which men, though fools, shall not err; in the King’s highway, the highway of the King of kings; in the plain beaten path of God’s commandments; and so shun the bypaths of sin, and abstain from all appearance of it: this is their common constant course of life; they are studiously concerned to walk herein, and take delight in so doing; whereby they escape many evils others fall into;

he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul, that keeps on in his way, the way in which the upright walk; whose eyes look right on, and his eyelids straight before him; who ponders the path of his feet, and turns neither to the right hand nor the left; who walks circumspectly and carefully; observes the road he is in, to keep in it, and not go out of it; such a man preserves his soul from many snares and temptations, troubles, dangers, and evils, which he would be otherwise liable to. Here the Masorites put the word **y×j** , signifying that this is the half or middle of the book.

Ver. 18. *Pride [goeth] before destruction,* etc.] As it did in the angels that sinned, who, through pride, fell into condemnation, not being able to bear the thought that the human nature, in the person of the Son of God, should be advanced above theirs; and as it did in our first parents, who, not content with their present state and circumstances, and ambitious of being as gods, knowing good and evil, ruined themselves and all their posterity; and as it has done in many of their sons, as in Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, and others;

and a haughty spirit before a fall; or, “a high spirit”, or “height of spirit”¹⁴⁶⁷; a man that carries his head high; looks upwards, and not to his

goings, sees not at what he may stumble, and so falls: moreover, the bigger a person or thing is, the greater is the fall; and very often when a man has got to the height of his riches and honour, and is swelling with pride and vanity on account of it, he is on the precipice of ruin, and his fall is immediate; which was the case of Nebuchadnezzar, who while he was expressing himself in the haughtiness of his spirit, being in the height of his glory, his kingdom departed from him, (²⁰⁴⁰Daniel 4:30,31); and this will be the case of the man of sin, or antichrist, (⁶⁶⁸⁰Revelation 18:7,8).

Ver. 19. *Better [it is to be] of an humble spirit with the lowly*, etc.] The followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, whose spirits are humbled under a sense of sin; have mean thoughts of themselves and their own righteousness, and submit to the righteousness of the Son of God, and wholly trust in him for salvation; and ascribe all they have and are to the free grace of God; humble themselves under the mighty hand of God; are resigned to his will, and patiently bear all afflictions without murmuring, and think better of others than themselves: these are not in so much danger of falling as the proud and haughty, and are more grateful to men, and acceptable to God; with these he vouchsafes to dwell; to these he gives more grace, and they shall inherit the earth. Wherefore it is better to be of such a spirit, and be ranked among and keep company with the meek and lowly,

than to divide the spoil with the proud; the spoils of the poor with proud oppressors; or spoils gotten in war with proud and ambitious princes; or the spoils of kingdoms and states with antichrist, divided by him among his proud followers: it is better to be the followers of Christ, and have but little, than to be his, and have ever so much.

Ver. 20. *He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good*, etc.] That frames and composes his discourse well on any subject he takes in hand; or manages his affairs prudently and discreetly, in which he is concerned; or that wisely attends to the affair of humility, as Aben Ezra: or rather to the word, that is, to the word of God; is not a careless, negligent, unconcerned hearer of the word, but a diligent and attentive one; whose heart is opened by the Spirit of God to attend to what is spoken in it; who lays it up in his heart, and makes it the rule of his conduct in life: such a man finds good things; things which are for his profit, edification, and instruction; good truths, good doctrines, good counsel and advice, good directions and

instructions; promises of good things, things for his present comfort and future happiness;

and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy [is] he; not to his own wisdom; nor in his own strength; nor in his riches, nor righteousness; nor in the favour of men, no, not of princes; but in the Lord, and in his Word; he shall want no good thing, he is kept in perfect peace; he is in the utmost safety, is like Mount Zion, that can never be removed, (^{<347D>}Jeremiah 17:7 ^{<238B>}Isaiah 26:3 ^{<384I>}Psalms 84:11,12 125:1).

Ver. 21. *The wise in heart shall be called prudent*, etc.] He that has true wisdom in the inward part; who knows his heart and the haughtiness of it; who has the fear of God in it, which is the beginning of wisdom; who is wise unto salvation, not only knows the scheme of it, but is experimentally acquainted with it; who has not head knowledge and wisdom only, but heart knowledge and wisdom, and behaves wisely in his life and conversation; who is so wise and endued with knowledge, as, out of a good conversation, to show his works with meekness of wisdom; such a man is called, reckoned, accounted, and spoken well of, as a prudent man among all wise and knowing persons;

and the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning; who, besides a wise heart and a knowing head, have the gift of elocution; can deliver themselves in a flowing easy style; can clothe their thoughts with proper words, and convey their ideas in clear expressions, in a very edifying and instructive manner: these communicate knowledge to others, and increase it in themselves: for, while they are improving others, they improve themselves and learning also, whether it be divine or human; these are such who are “apt to teach”, (^{<348E>}1 Timothy 3:2); and if they have proper hearers to attend them, they will “increase in learning”, as a just man does, (^{<310D>}Proverbs 9:9).

Ver. 22. *Understanding [is] a wellspring of life unto him that hath it*, etc.] “The master” or “owner of it”^{f468}. As he only is to whom an understanding is given; for, whatever understanding men may have of natural and civil things, they have none of things spiritual and divine, unless it be given them by Christ. This is no other than the grace of the Spirit of God, who is a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; and this is a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life, and it issues in it; with the knowledge of Christ, and God in Christ, eternal life is connected, (^{<304A>}John 4:14 17:3); and as this knowledge and understanding of things is

communicated by wise and knowing men, they are the means and instruments of the spiritual life of those to whom they minister, and are made useful;

but the instruction of fools [is] folly; the best instruction they are capable of giving is downright folly, and issues in death.

Ver. 23. *The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth*, etc.] That is, a man that is wise in heart, as in (³¹⁶²Proverbs 16:21); his heart will teach his mouth what to say, when to say it, and before whom; it will prompt him to matter, that he shall not be at a loss what to say, nor how to say; it will furnish him with words and things; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, (⁴¹²³Matthew 12:34);

and addeth learning to his lips: so that he does not deliver out mere words, but solid learning along with them, instructive to himself and others. The Targum is,

“and by his lips he addeth doctrine;”

or increases knowledge.

Ver. 24. *Pleasant words [are as] an honeycomb*, etc.] Jarchi interprets it of the words of the law; but it may be much better understood of the doctrines of the Gospel; such as the doctrines of God’s everlasting love, eternal election, the covenant of grace, the person of Christ as God-man; of peace and reconciliation by his blood; of remission of sins through his atoning sacrifice; of justification by his righteousness; of life and salvation by his obedience, sufferings, and death; all the doctrines of grace, which show that salvation in all its parts is owing entirely to the free grace of God; these are all pleasant to the ear of him that knows the joyful sound, and to the taste of everyone that has tasted that the Lord is gracious. The precious promises of the Gospel may be meant; which are free and unconditional, irrevocable, and immutable, never fail of accomplishment; are yea and amen in Christ, and are suited to the various cases of God’s people; these are very pleasant and delightful, when they are fitly spoken, and seasonably applied. Moreover, the speech of such as are wise in heart, true believers in Christ; their words, whether expressed in prayer or in praise, are pleasant to the Lord, and very grateful and acceptable to him: so their speech one to another, when about spiritual things; when it is with grace, then it ministers grace, and is very pleasant. Now all these, and especially the doctrines of the Gospel, are as “an honeycomb”; they are like

unto it for the manner of its production; it is wrought and filled by the laborious bee, which goes from flower to flower, and gathers honey, and brings it into the hive, and there disposes of it: so laborious ministers of the Gospel gather their doctrines from the sacred Scriptures, which they diligently search, and go from one to another, and gather something from each; and, being richly laden with the fulness of the blessing Of the Gospel of Christ, bring it into the hive of the church, and there feed men with knowledge and understanding: and the doctrines of the Gospel are like unto the honeycomb for the manner of its communication, by dropping freely, gradually, and constantly; so Gospel ministers drop the pleasant words of the Gospel freely, and without pressing, having no other constraint but love to Christ and the souls of men; they do it gradually, as men are able to bear; and constantly preach the word, in season and out of season: and as the honey which drops from the honeycomb is the choicest honey, called “life honey”; such are the truths of the Gospel, they are excellent things, the most excellent. Likewise these are as the honeycomb for the honey in it; they are like the honey out of the rock the Israelites ate of; and like that out of the lion Samson fed upon; and like that which Jonathan tasted, that enlightened his eyes. The Gospel flows from Christ, the Rock; and is to be found in him, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and as slain, and has an enlightening virtue in it; and particularly these pleasant words are said to be as the honeycomb for its sweetness and healthfulness, as follows:

sweet to the soul, and health to the bones; they are “sweet” to the “soul” of him that understands them, and that has a spiritual taste of them; not to a natural and unregenerate man, whose natural taste remains in him, and is not changed; who calls evil good, and good evil; puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; to him the doctrines of the Gospel are insipid, tasteless, and disagreeable things: nor are they sweet to a carnal professor; who, though he may express some value for them, has no spiritual gust and relish of them; but to them that believe, to whom Christ is precious, who have tasted that he is gracious; to these they are sweet, even sweeter than the honey or the honeycomb, (~~990~~ Psalm 19:10 119:103 ~~218~~ Song of Solomon 2:3 ~~311~~ Ezekiel 2:1-3:27). And they are “health to the bones”; they are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus; they are the means of curing the diseases of the mind; of healing wounded spirits, and broken hearts, and broken bones; they make the bones which were broken to rejoice; what heals the bones strengthens the whole man, a man’s strength lying much in

his bones; these strengthen the inward man, cause believers to go from strength to strength, and to hold on and persevere to the end.

Ver. 25. *There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof [are] the ways of death.*] The same is said in (²¹⁴¹²Proverbs 14:12), and is here repeated because of the excellence, importance, and usefulness of the observation, and to excite an attention to it; that men may be more diligent to look into their ways, and be more cautious where and how they walk, and be more considerate and thoughtful of the issue of them. (See Gill on ²¹⁴¹²Proverbs 14:12”).

Ver. 26. *He that laboureth, laboureth for himself,* etc.] Man is born for labour; it is a part of the curse inflicted on him for sin; and his condition and circumstances are such as make it necessary, for such who will not work ought not to eat; and it is labouring for food and raiment which is here meant, and that is for a man’s self; for if he labours to be rich and lay up money, and purchase estates, these are more for others than himself, and indeed he knows not for whom he labours. It is indeed in the original, “the soul of him that labours^{f469}, labours for himself”; and it may be understood of the labour of, the soul for spiritual things, for spiritual food, for that meat which endures to everlasting life; and may intend the various exercises of religion in which men employ themselves, that they may have food for their souls, and grow thereby; such as praying, reading the Scriptures, attending on the ministry of the word and ordinances: and this labouring is for themselves; for the good and welfare of their immortal souls, for their spiritual prosperity, for the nourishing of them up unto everlasting life. It may be applied to Gospel ministers, who labour in the Lord’s vineyard, in the word and doctrine; and though in the first place they labour to promote the glory of God and the interest of Christ, and the good of souls, yet it also turns to their own account; and indeed they labour to be accepted of the Lord, and at last shall hear, “Well done, good and faithful Servant; enter into the joy of thy Lord”, (⁴¹⁵²³Matthew 25:23). Some render the words, “he that is troublesome is troublesome to himself^{f470}”, as such an one is, not only to others, but to himself also; he is the cause of great inquietude to his own mind;

for his mouth craveth it of him: that he should labour, in order to satisfy his appetite; for “all the labour of man is for his mouth”, to feed that and fill his belly, (²¹⁰¹⁷Ecclesiastes 6:7); or “his mouth boweth unto him^{f471}”; it is as it were an humble supplicant to him, entreating: him to labour to get

food for it, and satisfy its wants; or as a beast bows down to feed itself; or “boweth upon him”^{f472}; it obliges him, as the Vulgate Latin version; it compels him, whether he will or not, to work, its necessities are so pressing: and this holds good in spiritual things; a man’s mouth, or spiritual appetite, puts him upon the use of means of spiritual exercises, without which he must otherwise be in a starving condition; and is true of the ministers of the word, whose mouth obliges them; as it were; they cannot but speak the things they have heard and seen: or “his mouth reflects upon him”; upon the man that has been troublesome to himself and others; the Targum is,

“for from his mouth humiliation shall come to him;”

or his destruction, as the Syriac version.

Ver. 27. *An ungodly man diggeth up evil*, etc.] Or “a man of Belial”^{f473}, a worthless unprofitable man; a man without a yoke, not obedient to the law of God; such a man digs for sin as for a treasure; nor need he go far for it, he has enough in his own heart, out of the evil treasure of which he brings forth evil things; though he is more solicitous and diligent to search into the sins of others, and dig up them, which have long lain buried; as the Manichees raked up the sins of Austin in his youth; and as the Papists served Beza: but perhaps the evil of mischief is here rather intended, which a wicked man contrives and devises; a ditch he digs for others, though oftentimes he falls into it himself; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “digs evils for himself”; not intentionally but eventually; (see ^{<1975>}Psalm 7:15);

and in his lips [there is] as a burning fire; his tongue is a fire, it is set on fire of hell, and it sets on fire the course of nature; and with its lies, calumnies, and detractions, devours and consumer the good names, characters, and credit of men; and deserves no other than sharp arrows of the Almighty, and coals of juniper; even the everlasting fire and flames of hell, (^{<3086>}James 3:6 ^{<3510>}Psalm 52:2,4 120:3,4).

Ver. 28. *A froward man soweth strife*, etc.] Or “a man of perversenesses”^{f474}; in whose heart is frowardness and perverseness; and whose mouth speaketh froward and perverse things, contrary to reason, law, and Gospel; and who has a spirit of contradiction, and is contrary to all men in his principles and practices; such a man sows discord and strife wherever he comes, in families, in neighbourhoods, in churches, in

commonwealths, in civil and religious societies; and he seldom fails of finding a soil fit for his purpose, or ground susceptible of the seed he sows, where it takes root and thrives; (see ²¹⁶⁹Proverbs 6:19);

and a whisperer separateth chief friends; one that goes from place to place, from house to house, carrying tales, whispering into the ears of persons things prejudicial to the characters of others, mere lies and falsehoods; such a man by his conduct separates one friend from another, even chief friends, that have been for a long time in the closest and most intimate friendship; he alienates their minds one from another, so that they will not come near one another, or keep up any correspondence as before. The word for “chief friends” is in the singular number, and signifies a prince or leader; and such men, according to the station they are in, and the influence they have, separate princes, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, from their subjects, and stir up the latter to rebel against them; at least alienate their affections from them; and pastors of churches from their flocks, and husbands from their wives: and such a man, at last, when found out, separates his best friends from himself, as well as from one another; who drop him as a worthless person, yea, as dangerous to converse with; so sin, that whisperer and agitator, separates between God and men, (²⁸⁰²Isaiah 59:2).

Ver. 29. *A violent man enticeth his neighbour*, etc.] As false teachers do, who are grievous wolves, not sparing the flock, and who by good words and fair speeches deceive the heart of the simple; and as the man of sin, that has shed the blood of the saints, and been drunk with the same, deceives with his miracles and sorceries them that dwell on the earth;

and leadeth him into the way [that is] not good; yea, into one that is very bad; so far are false teachers from leading their neighbours into the good old way of truth and righteousness, that they lead them into pernicious ways, by whom the way; of truth is spoken evil of; they lead them into a ditch, and into destruction hereafter; as does the man of sin and violence his followers.

Ver. 30. *He shutteth his eyes to devise froward things*, etc.] Or “perverse” or “contrary things”^{f475}; he shuts his eyes, that his thoughts might not be disturbed and distracted by visible objects, but might be more free and composed, and intent upon the things he is meditating and devising; or he shuts his eyes against light, against Scripture evidence, which he does not care to come to, lest his principles and practices should be reprov'd; he

shuts his eyes, and will not look into the Scriptures, that he may form and devise schemes of doctrine and worship contrary to them. Some render it, he winks with his eyes, as in (^{<2163>}Proverbs 6:13); so the Targum; he gives the hint thereby to his companions, when is the proper time to circumvent an innocent person, and to put in execution the scheme he had devised;

moving his lips he bringeth evil to pass; either as persons in deep thought used to do; or as a token to others to set about the evil designed and contrived; or rather as acting a deceitful part, as a false teacher; not speaking out his mind freely, but muttering out his words, handling the word of God deceitfully, and not by manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, as a faithful minister does; and by such artful methods brings his evil designs to pass. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "biting his lips"; so a wicked man does through indignation at a good man, and through desire of revenge; and when he plots against him, he gnashes at him with his teeth, (^{<3872>}Psalm 37:12). The Targum is,

"threatening with his lips;"

he gives out menaces of evil things, and performs them; which is true of the man of sin, (^{<635>}Revelation 13:5-7).

Ver. 31. *The hoary head [is] a crown of glory*, etc.] Gray hairs, white locks through age are very ornamental; look very beautiful, bespeak gravity, wisdom, and prudence, and command reverence and respect; with the ancient Romans^{f476}, greater honour was paid to age than to family or wealth; and the elder were revered by the younger next to God, and in the stead of parents; (see Gill on "^{<892>}Leviticus 19:32");

[if] it be found in the way of righteousness; that is, if such who are old and stricken in years are like Zacharias and Elisabeth, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; when they are found in Christ, having on his righteousness; and when they live soberly, righteously, and godly; when they walk in the ways of God and true religion; keep up family worship, and private devotion; as well as constantly attend the ministry of the word and ordinances; then are they very venerable and respectable; their old age is a good old age; and in a short time they shall have the crown of glory which fadeth not away: but otherwise a sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed; an old man in the

open ways of sin and vice, laden with iniquity, is a very contemptible and shocking sight.

Ver. 32. [*He that is] slow to anger is better than the mighty*, etc.] Than a mighty warrior or conqueror; as Alexander who conquered his enemies, and even all the world, and yet in his wrath slew his best friends: a man that is slow to anger is esteemed by the Lord, respected by men, and is happy in himself; and is preferable to the strongest man that is not master of himself and of his passions;

and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city; one that has the command of his temper, that can govern himself, and not suffer his passions to exceed due bounds, is superior in strength to him that can storm a castle or take a fortified city; it is easier to do the one than the other; courage of mind joined with wisdom, and assisted by a proper number of persons, may do the one; but it requires the grace of God, and the assistance of his spirit, thoroughly to do the other. Cicero says^{f477}, in all ages

“fewer men are found who conquer their own lusts than that overcome the armies of enemies.”

Ver. 33. *The lot is cast into the lap*, etc.] Of a man’s garment, or into his bosom, or into a hat, cap, urn, or whatsoever he has in his lap, and from whence it is taken out; which used to be done in choosing officers, civil or ecclesiastical; in dividing inheritances, and determining doubtful cases; and making up differences, and putting an end to strife and contentions, which otherwise could not be done: and this ought not to be used in trivial cases, or to gratify curiosity, or for the sake of gain, or rashly and superstitiously; but seriously and religiously, with prayer, and in faith, and with a view to the divine direction, and submission to it; for a lot has the nature of an oath, and is an appeal to the omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent Being;

but the whole disposing thereof [is] of the Lord; or “the judgment”^{f478} of it; the judgment that is to be made by it concerning persons or things; it being so directed and ordered by him as to fall upon the person it should; or to make known the thing in doubt and debate according to his will, in which all parties concerned should acquiesce. This is to be ascribed, not to blind chance and fortune, to the influence of the stars, or to any invisible created being, angel or devil, but to the Lord only; there is no such thing as

chance, or events by chance; those events which seem most fortuitous or contingent are all disposed, ordered, and governed, by the sovereign will of God.

CHAPTER 17

Ver. 1. *Better [is] a dry morsel, and quietness therewith,* etc.] A small quantity of bread; a broken piece of bread, as the word ^{f479} signifies; which has been long broken off, and become “dry”^{f480}; a dry crust of bread; old bread, as the Arabic version; an old, mouldy, dry piece of bread: and the word used has the signification of destruction in it: bread that has lost its taste and virtue; or, however, a mere piece of bread is meant, without anything to eat with it, as Gersom, butter, cheese, or flesh: this, with quietness and peace among those that partake of it, peace in the family, in a man’s own mind, especially if he has the peace of God, which passeth all understanding; this is better

than a house full of sacrifices [with] strife; than a house ever so well furnished with good cheer, or a table ever so richly spread; or where there is plenty of slain beasts for food, or for sacrifice, which were usually the best, and part of which the people had to eat, and at which times feasts used to be made; but the meanest food, with tranquillity and contentment, is preferable to the richest entertainment where there is nothing but strife and contention among the guests; for, where that is, there is confusion and every evil work: peace and joy in the Holy Ghost are better than meats and drinks. Mr. Dod used to say,

“brown bread and the Gospel are good fare;”

(see ³¹⁵⁷Proverbs 15:17).

Ver. 2. *A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame,* etc.] That does wicked and shameful actions: that is slothful, and will not attend to instruction or business; that is prodigal, wasteful, and luxurious, and causes shame to his parents, who blush at his conduct. Now a servant that behaves well and wisely in a family is observed and respected by his master, and he puts his wicked and extravagant son under him, makes him a tutor to him, and sets him to watch over him, and obliges his son to obey his orders. Jarchi illustrates this in Nebuchadnezzar ruling over the children of Israel;

and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren; be appointed by his master’s will to a share in his estate among his children, for his

faithful service to him in life, and to encourage him to take care of his family, his children, and his affairs, after his death; or through gifts in his lifetime shall have what is equal to what his sons have; or growing rich shall purchase a part of theirs, as Gussetius^{f481}; or “shall part the inheritance among the brethren”^{f482}; being a wise man, his master shall leave him executor of his will, to divide his substance among his children, and see that everyone have their proper portion and equal share; but it rather is to be understood of his being a co-heir with them. So the Gentiles, through the will of the Lord, become fellow heirs of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ with the Jews, and share in the same inheritance with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their children; nay, when the children of the kingdom shall be shut out; (see <486> Ephesians 3:6 <481> Matthew 8:11,12). Jarchi gives an ancient exposition of it thus,

“a proselyte of righteousness is better than a wicked native; and in time to come he shall divide the spoil and the inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel, at it is said in (<473> Ezekiel 47:23);”

Ver. 3. *The fining pot [is] for silver, and the furnace for gold,* etc.]

Refiners of silver have their fining pots, in which they purify the silver from the dross; and goldsmiths have their crucibles to melt and purify their gold, by which assays of the worth and value of it may be made;

but the Lord trieth the hearts; there is no vessel, as Gersom observes, in which they can be put and tried by creatures; a man does not know, nor can he thoroughly search and try his own heart, and much less the hearts of others; God only knows and tries them, (<470> Jeremiah 17:9,10); The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, render it by way of similitude, “as the fining pot is for silver”, etc. as silver is refined in the pot, and gold in the furnace, so are the hearts of God’s people, and their graces tried and purified by him in the furnace of affliction; the variety of troubles they are exercised with are made useful for the purging away of the dross of sin and corruption, and for the brightening of their graces, (<407> 1 Peter 1:7).

Ver. 4. *A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips,* etc.] A man of an ill spirit, of a mischievous disposition, that delights in doing wickedness; he carefully attends to such as speak falsehood; he listens to lies and calumnies, loves to hear ill reports of persons, and takes pleasure in spreading them to the hurt of their characters; and men of bad hearts and lives give heed to

seducing spirits, to false teachers, to inch as speak lies in hypocrisy, who sooth and harden them in their wickedness;

[and] a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue: or, “to a tongue of destruction”^{f483}; a cullumniating, backbiting tongue, which destroys the good name and reputation of men; and he that is given to lying is made up of lying, or is a lie itself, as the word signifies; who roves and makes a lie, as antichrist and his followers; such an one hearkens diligently to everything that may detract from the character of those especially he bears an ill will to: or it may be better rendered, “he that hearkens to a lie [gives heed] to a naughty tongue”^{f484}; for a lying tongue is a naughty one, evil in itself, pernicious in its effects and consequences.

Ver. 5. *Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker,* etc.] He that mocks the poor for his poverty, Upbraids him with his mean appearance, scoffs at the clothes he wears or food he eats, such an one reproaches his Creator; or, as the Targum,

“provokes his Creator to anger;”

him who is his own Creator as well as the poor man’s; him who made the poor man, both as a man and as a poor man; and who could have made him rich if he would, as well as the man that mocks at him; whose riches are not of himself, but of God; and who can take them away, and give them to the poor man if he pleases; and therefore rich men should be careful how they mock the poor; for, as Gersom observes, he that derides a work derides the workman;

[and] he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished; or “at calamity”^{f485}; at the calamity of another, as the Vulgate Latin; and so Gersom; for no man rejoices at his own calamity; at the calamity of the poor, as Aben Ezra; or of his neighbour or companion, as the Targum; or at the calamity of any of his fellow creatures, as the Edomites rejoiced at the calamity of the Jews, but were in their turn destroyed; and as the Jews rejoiced when the Christians were persecuted by Nero, and at length were destroyed themselves by the Romans; and as the Papists will rejoice when the witnesses are slain, and quickly after seven thousand men of name will be slain of them, and the rest frightened, (^{<6110>} Revelation 11:10,13).

Ver. 6. *Children’s children [are] the crown of old men,* etc.] Ancient parents. Grandfathers with the Jews are called old men, as Buxtorf^{f486} observes. A numerous progeny was reckoned a great blessing to a man; to

have his table surrounded with children, as olive plants; to be encircled with a large family was a crown of glory^{f487}; and to live to see children's children, a large number of grandchildren, was still a greater glory; and especially, as Jarchi observes, when these children, or children's children, were walking in a good way, in the good ways of religion and godliness, they trained them up in. Christ is the Ancient of days, the everlasting Father; and it is his glory, as Mediator, to see his seed, to have a numerous off spring; and which will endure for ever, as the days of heaven: ministers of the Gospel are spiritual fathers; and those who have been converted under their ministry wilt be their joy and "crown of rejoicing" at the last day, (²³¹⁹1 Thessalonians 2:19);

and the glory of children [are] their fathers; who are wise, as Aben Ezra observes; and righteous, as Jarchi: if they are wise and good men, it is an honour to their children that they descend from them; nor are they ashamed to own their relation to them, but glory in it, as the Jews did in Abraham, saying, "We have Abraham for our father", (^{418B}Matthew 3:9) (^{418B}Luke 3:8): but, on the contrary, if their fathers are foolish or wicked, their children are ashamed of them, and do not care to acknowledge their descent from them; and such parents, who are an honour to their children, their children should be careful to tread in their steps, that they reflect no dishonour on them; particularly as it is our great honour and glory to have God for our father, to be his adopted sons and daughters, we should be followers of him as dear children, and be obedient ones.

Ver. 7. *Excellent speech becometh not a fool*, etc.] A wicked man. Eloquence, or a sublime grand way of speaking, a copiousness and fluency of expression, become not such; because hereby he may be capable of doing more mischief; or such a style is unsuitable to the subject of his discourse, which is nothing but folly and wickedness. The Gospel is excellent speech, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; it treats of excellent things; concerning the person, office, and grace of Christ, and salvation by him; and very unfit is a wicked man to take it into his mouth, talk of it, and declare it;

much less do lying lips a prince; they rather become a fool, as excellent speech does a prince; who neither should speak lies himself, nor encourage, but abhor them in others. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "a just man": but the word more property signifies a liberal man, as it is rendered in (²³¹⁸Isaiah 32:8); where it stands opposed to a churl or

covetous man: and some Jewish^{f488} writers think by the “fool” is meant such an one to whom a “lip of abundance”^{f489}, as it may be rendered, is very unsuitable; or to talk of his abundance, when he makes no good use of what he has for himself or others; and so, on the other hand, it is very disagreeable to the character of an ingenuous and liberal man to promise and not perform, and never intended it. It is true of such who are made a “willing” people in the day of Christ’s power, (~~HB~~ Psalm 110:3); where the same word is used as here; of his volunteers; that to speak lies one to another very ill becomes them; or to receive, or to speak, or profess false doctrines; for no lie is of the truth.

Ver. 8. *A gift [is as] a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it*, etc.] Or “is a stone of grace”^{f490}, the note of similitude being wanting. It is an ornament of grace, adorns the person that wears it, makes him look lovely and amiable; is very grateful and desirable in itself, attracts and dazzles the eyes, and fills the mind with pleasure; so is a gift in the eyes of him that has it, that is the owner of it; either that has it in his possession to give, is the giver of it, as Aben Ezra; which, as it is valuable in his own eyes, he judges it to be so with others, and thinks he can do what he pleases with it, and engage persons by it to do as he would have them: or that is the receiver of it, as the Targum; who, having it given him, is master of it, and is so acceptable to him, and has such an influence upon him, as to do anything for it the giver of it directs him to, as follows:

whithersoever it turneth it prospereth: to whatsoever cause, or to whatsoever persons, judge or jury, it is given and received; it succeeds far better than the most eloquent orations, or learned pleadings in law, or appeals to statutes, and the production of them. Money answers all things; a gift blinds the eyes; it is like a diamond, so sparkling and dazzling, so charming and attracting, that the person to whom it is offered cannot resist it; and it draws him to do whatever is desired of him; it carries the cause, it succeeds according to the wish of the giver: or, as the Arabic version renders it,

“he shall find his business plain;”

done as he would have it. Jarchi applies the proverb thus;

“when a man comes before the Lord, and bribes him with words, and returns unto him, it is a precious stone in his eyes; and in all that he asks of him he prospers.”

Ver. 9. *He that covereth a transgression seeketh love*, etc.] He that hides the transgression of another, or of his friend, committed against himself or against another, which he is privy to; but the matter being made up, and the offence forgiven, he forgets it, and no more speaks of it to his friend, or upbraids him with it, nor spreads it among others: such a man shows that he loves his friend, and is desirous that love and friendship should be continued; and this is the way to continue it; and a man that thus seeks it finds it. Or it may be rendered, “he covereth a transgression who seeketh love”^{f491}; for “love covereth all things”, (^{<2002>}Proverbs 10:12);

but he that repeateth a matter; the matter of the transgression, the thing that has given the offence; that rakes it up again, when it has been covered; upbraids his friend with it, when it has been passed over and forgiven; will frequently hit him on the teeth with it, and talk of it wherever he comes, and spread the knowledge of it in all places: he

separateth [very] friends; he sets the best of friends at variance one with another by such a practice; for this pursued, friendship cannot subsist long among men: he separates his best friend from himself, and himself from him. The word signifies a prince, leader, or governor; (see Gill on ^{<2068>}Proverbs 16:28”); and Jarchi interprets it thus;

“he separates from himself the Governor of the world, the holy blessed God.”

Ver. 10. *A reproof entereth more into a wise man*, etc.] A single verbal reproof, gently, kindly, and prudently given, not only enters the ear, but the heart of a wise and understanding man; it descends into him, as the word^{f492} signifies; it sinks deep into his mind; it penetrates into his heart, and pierces his conscience; brings him easily to humiliation, confession, and reformation. Or, “reproof is more terror to a wise man”; as Jarchi interprets it, and the Tigurine version; it awes and terrifies him more; a single word has more effect upon him, entering more easily into him,

than an hundred stripes into a fool; or, “than smiting a fool a hundred times”^{f493}: a word to a wise man is more than a hundred blows to a fool, will sooner correct and amend him; a word will enter where a blow will not; stripes only reach the back, but not the heart of a fool; he is never the better for all the corrections given him; his heart is not affected, is not humbled, nor brought to a sense of sin, and acknowledgment of it; nor is he in the least reformed: or a single reproof to a wise man is of more

service than a hundred reproofs to a fool; which are sometimes expressed by smiting, “let the righteous smite me”, etc. (~~HEB~~ Psalm 141:5).

Ver. 11. *An evil [man] seeketh only rebellion*, etc.] For he seeks nothing but what is evil; and all sin is rebellion against God, a contempt of his laws, and a transgression of them; a trampling upon his legislative power and authority; an act of hostility against him, and a casting off allegiance to him. Or rather the words may be rendered, “rebellion”, that is, “the rebellious man”, so the Targum, the abstract for the concrete, “verily” or “only seeketh evil”^{f494}; a man that is rebellious against his prince, that is of a rebellious disposition, is continually seeking to do mischief in the commonwealth; he is continually plotting and contriving destructive schemes, and stirring up sedition, and causing trouble; and so a rebel against God is always seeking that which is sinful, which is evil in its own nature, and contrary to the law and will of God; and in the issue brings the evil of punishment on himself;

therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him: if a rebel against his lawful sovereign, a messenger shall be sent by him to take him into custody, who will show him no mercy; or an executioner to dispatch him, who will not spare to perform his orders: and if a rebel against God, some judgment of God shall fall upon him in a very severe manner; or his own conscience shall accuse him, and shall be filled with dreadful apprehensions of divine vengeance; or Satan, the angel of death, shall be let loose upon him, to terrify or destroy him; or death itself, which spares none. The Septuagint and Arabic versions ascribe this to God as his act, rendering it, “the Lord shall send”, etc. and so Aben Ezra; who also refers the former clause to him, and gives it as the sense of it; that he shall seek to do the rebellious man evil, inflict on him the evil of punishment for the evil of sin.

Ver. 12. *Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man*, etc.] A bear is a very fierce and furious creature, especially a she bear; and she is still more so when robbed of her whelps, which she has just whelped, and been at great pains to lick into shape and form, by which her fondness to them is increased; and therefore, being stripped of them, is full of rage; and ranging about in quest of them, falls furiously upon the first she meets with. Jerom^{f495} observes, that those who have written of the nature of beasts say, that, among all wild beasts, there is none more fierce than a she bear, when she has lost her whelps, or wants food. And yet, as terrible and as

dangerous as it is, it is safer and more eligible of the two, to meet an enraged bear in those circumstances,

rather than a fool in his folly; in the height of his folly, in a paroxysm or fit of that; in the heat of his lusts, and the pursuit of them, in which there is no stopping him, or turning him from them; especially in the heat of passion and anger, which exceeds that of a bear, and is not so easily avoided. Jarchi applies it to such fools as seduce persons to idolatry, whom to meet is very dangerous: such are the followers of the man of sin, who have no mercy on the souls of men they deceive, and whose damnation they are the cause of; and who are implacably cruel to those who will not join with them in their idolatrous worship; the beast of Rome, his feet are as the feet of a bear, (^{<613D>}Revelation 13:2); and one had better meet a bear than him and his followers.

Ver. 13. *Whoso rewardeth evil for good*, etc.] As the enemies of David and Christ rewarded them, (^{<495I2>}Psalm 35:12 109:5); this is base ingratitude, contrary to the law and light of nature; worse than beastly, is really devilish;

evil shall not depart from his house; from him and his family; they shall be continually visited with one disease and calamity or another; so hateful and offensive is the sin of ingratitude to God, and therefore ought to be carefully avoided. This might be illustrated by the judgments of God on the nation of the Jews, for their ingratitude to Christ.

Ver. 14. *The beginning of strife [is as] when one letteth out water*, etc.] As when a man makes a little hole in the bank of a river, or cuts a small passage in it, to let the water into an adjoining field; by the force of the water, the passage is widened, and it flows in, in great abundance, to the overflow and prejudice of the field; nor is it easily stopped: so a single word, spoken in anger, with some warmth, or in a way of contradiction, has been the beginning and occasion of great strife and contention. The words in the Hebrew text lie thus; “he that letteth out water [is] the beginning of strife”^{f496}; which some understand of letting out water into another man’s field, which occasions contentions, quarrels, and lawsuits; but the former sense is best: the Targum is,

“he that sheddeth blood as water stirreth up strifes;”

therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with; cease from it as soon as begun; leave it off before it is well entered: or “before one mixes

himself^{f497} with it, or is implicated with it; got so far into it, that it will be difficult to get out of it: or “before thou strivest with any openly”; which sense the word has in the Arabic language, as Schultens^{f498} observes; that is, before you come to open words and blows, put an end to the contention; do not suffer it to proceed so far; since it cannot be known what will be the consequence of it: or rather, leave it off, as the same learned writer in his later thoughts, in his commentary on the place, by the help of Arabism, also renders it, “before the teeth are made bare”: or shown, in quarrelling, brawling, reproaching, in wrath and anger.

Ver. 15. *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just,* etc.] That absolves and clears the guilty, and pronounces him righteous in open court, where he stands arraigned, accused, and the fact proved; and that adjudges an innocent man to condemnation; or passes the sentence of it upon him, when it is a clear case he is not guilty;

even they both [are] abomination to the Lord: being contrary to law and justice, to the declared will of God, and the orders and instructions given by him to judges, (⁽¹⁸²¹⁾Deuteronomy 25:1); such an abominable action were the Jews guilty of in desiring Barabbas, a wicked man, to be released, and Christ, the just One, to be condemned; and Pilate in complying with them. From this passage we learn, that the word “justify” is used in a forensic sense, for pronouncing persons just in a court of judicature; and in which sense it is used in the article of a sinner’s justification before God: by which act, though it is an ungodly person that is justified, yet it is through the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and is quite agreeable to law and the justice of God; and not at all inconsistent with this passage, which represents the justification of a wicked man as an abomination: it is so where there is no righteousness, but not where there is; agreeably to which is the saying of an Heathen^{f499} poet,

“it is not righteous, neither rashly to condemn bad men good, nor good men bad.”

Ver. 16. *Wherefore [is there] a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom,* etc.] Natural wisdom and knowledge. By this “price” may be meant money, riches, worldly substance, of which a foolish man is possessed; by means of which he might purchase useful books for the improvement of his mind, and procure himself instructors that might be very useful to him; but instead of seeking after that which he most wants, and making use of his substance to furnish him with it, he spends it on his back and belly, in fine

clothes and luxurious living; in rioting and drunkenness, in chambering and wantonness, at balls and plays, in taverns and brothel houses: or spiritual wisdom and knowledge; the means of which are reading the word, hearing the Gospel, frequent opportunities of attendance on a Gospel ministry, in season and out of season, and conversation with Gospel ministers and other Christians; but, instead of making use of these, he neglects, slights, and despises them. And it is asked, with some degree of indignation and admiration, why or to what purpose a fool is favoured with such means;

seeing [he hath] no heart [to it]? to wisdom; he does not desire it, nor to make use of the price or means, in order to obtain it; all is lost upon him; and it is hard to account for it why he should have this price, when he makes such an ill use of it.

Ver. 17. *A friend loveth at all times*, etc.] A true, hearty, faithful friend, loves in times of adversity as well as in times of prosperity: there are many that are friends to persons, while they are in affluent circumstances; but when there is a change in their condition, and they are stripped of all riches and substance; than their friends forsake them, and stand at a distance from them; as was the case of Job, (~~8914~~ Job 19:14); it is a very rare thing to find a friend that is a constant lover, such an one as here described;

and a brother is born for adversity; for a time of adversity, as Jarchi: he is born into the world for this purpose; to sympathize with his brother in distress, to relieve him, comfort and support him; and if he does not do this, when it is in his power to do it, he does not answer the end of his being born into the world. The Jewish writers understand this as showing the difference between a friend and a brother: a cordial friend loves at all times, prosperous and adverse; but a “brother [loves when] adversity [is] born”^{f500}, or is, so Aben Ezra; he loves when he is forced to it; when the distress of his brother, who is his flesh and bone, as Gersom observes, obliges him to it: but this may be understood of the same person who is the friend; he is a brother, and acts the part of one in a time of adversity, for which he is born and brought into the world; it being so ordered by divine Providence, that a man should have a friend born against the time he stands in need of him^{f501}. To no one person can all this be applied with so much truth and exactness as to our Lord Jesus Christ; he is a “friend”, not of angels only, but of men; more especially of his church and people; of sinful men, of publicans and sinners; as appears by his calling them to repentance, by his receiving them, and by his coming into the world to save them: he

“loves” them, and loves them constantly; he loved them before time; so early were they on his heart and in his book of life; so early was he the surety of them, and the covenant of grace made with him; and their persons and grace put into his hands, which he took the care of: he loved them in time, and before time began with them; thus they were preserved in him, when they fell in Adam; were redeemed by his precious blood, when as yet they were not in being, at least many of them: he loves them as soon as time begins with them, as soon as born; though impure by their first birth, transgressors from the womb, enemies and enmity itself unto him; he waits to be gracious to them, and sends his Gospel and his Spirit to find them out and call them: and he continues to love them after conversion; in times of backsliding; in times of desertion; in times of temptation, and in times of affliction: he loves them indeed to the end of time, and to all eternity; nor is there a moment of time to be fixed upon, in which he does not love them. And he is a “brother” to his people; through his incarnation, he is a partaker of the same flesh and blood with them; and through their adoption, they having one and the same Father; nor is he ashamed to own the relation; and he has all the freedom, affection, compassion, and condescension, of a brother in him: and now he is a brother “born”; (see ²³⁰⁶Isaiah 9:6); born of a woman, a virgin, at Bethlehem, in the fulness of time, for and on the behalf of his people; even “for adversity”; to bear and endure adversity himself, which he did, by coming into a state of meanness and poverty; through the reproaches and persecutions of men, the temptations of Satan, the ill usage of his own disciples, the desertion of his father, the strokes of justice, and the sufferings of death; also for the adversity of his people, to sympathize with them, bear them up under it, and deliver them out of it. The ancient Jews had a notion that this Scripture has some respect to the Messiah; for, to show that the Messiah, being God, would by his incarnation become a brother to men, they cite this passage of Scripture as a testimony of it ^{f502}.

Ver. 18. *A man void of understanding striketh hands*, etc.] With his friend’s creditor, and becomes surety for him; and thereby acts a very unwise part, and shows himself to want understanding, by taking such a step, which may prove the ruin of himself and family: for though a man may and should love his friend at all times; yet he is not obliged, under a notion of friendship, to injure himself and his family, or to run the risk of it; if he does, it is a plain case he wants wisdom and discretion, (see ²⁰⁰¹Proverbs 6:1);

[and] becometh surety in the presence of his friend; not the creditor, but the debtor; and to pass his word for him, when he is present, shows that his own word will not be taken; and that he is either thought to be in bad circumstances, and incapable of payment at the proper time; or else that he is a bad man, of dishonest principles, and will not; and in either case it is not advisable to become surety for such a man: and besides, doing it in his presence may make him more careless and unconcerned about making good his payment or contract at the appointed time, when he knows his friend is engaged him.

Ver. 19. *He loveth transgression that loveth strife*, etc.] For strife is transgression, when it flows from a malignant spirit, is with bad views, about things to no profit, and for contention's sake; otherwise to contend earnestly for the truth; to strive together for the faith of the Gospel, for matters of moment and importance, and not mere words; to strive lawfully in a cause that is just, and for truth and justice, is commendable and praiseworthy;

[and] he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction; that opens the door of his lips, and speaks proudly, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it; who compare it with (^{<307B>}Micah 7:5); who set their mouths against heaven, and God in it; and whose tongue walks through the earth, and spares none there, (^{<307A>}Psalms 73:8,9); as antichrist, who opens his mouth in blasphemy against God and his tabernacle, and exalts himself above all that is called God; and such, sooner or later, bring destruction on themselves, and find it as surely as if they sought for it. Or this may be understood of proud ambitious persons, that build houses more magnificent than their substance will allow of, the gate being put for the whole; by which means they bring themselves to ruin. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, have it in (^{<307C>}Proverbs 17:16), “he that buildeth his house high”; or who behaves proudly.

Ver. 20. *He that hath a froward heart findeth no good*, etc.] Who is of a perverse spirit, meditates and devises evil things; is not ingenuous and sincere, but false and deceitful to God and men: such an one gets no good from either; he obtains not the favour of God, nor a good name, credit, and reputation among men;

and he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief; or “that turns himself”, or “is turned in his tongue”¹⁵⁰³; whose tongue is changeable, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; who sometimes says one thing, and

sometimes another, and is not consistent with himself; as well as is contrary to all men: sooner or later he falls into mischief, into a pit, which he himself has dug for others; see (^{^{900b}}James 3:6,8).

Ver. 21. *He that begetteth a fool [doth it] to his sorrow*, etc.] As it proves in the issue; though it was joy to him when a man child was born, and took delight in him while in infancy and childhood, and promised himself much happiness in him when at years of discretion; but, instead of that, he departs from his education principles, despises all parental counsels and advice, and goes into all the extravagance of sin and folly; which is an heartbreaking to his godly and religious parents; for this is to be understood; not of an idiot, but of a wicked son, taking bad courses;

and the father of a fool hath no joy; in his son, but sorrow, and has scarce any joy or pleasure in anything else in all his enjoyments; the trouble he is filled with on his account embitters all he has, that he can take no satisfaction, or have any comfort of life; the concern for his son is uppermost in his thoughts, and hinders him from taking that pleasure which otherwise he might enjoy.

Ver. 22. *A merry heart doth good [like] a medicine*, etc.] Does the body good, makes it healthful and vigorous. Cheerfulness of spirit has a great influence upon the body, and much contributes to the health and welfare of it; (see ^{^{2000b}}Ecclesiastes 9:7-9); and especially a heart full of spiritual joy, peace of conscience, flowing from the blood of Christ, joy in the Holy Ghost, a rejoicing in Christ Jesus and his righteousness, and in hope of the glory of God, much affect even the outward man. Or, “a merry heart makes a good medicine”^{f504}; it is a good medicine of itself; raises the spirits, invigorates the body, and fits it for service and business: or, “does a medicine good”^{f505}; makes that operate kindly, and to a good purpose: or, as Jarchi, makes the countenance shine well, makes a serene countenance; which Schultens approves, and, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, confirms;

but a broken spirit drieth the bones; a spirit broken with sorrow, whether on spiritual or temporal accounts; as it weakens the nerves, it dries up the marrow in the bones, and emaciates the body, and reduces it to a skeleton: the joy or grief of the mind, those passions of the soul, have a very great influence upon the body, either for its good or hurt.

Ver. 23. *A wicked [man] taketh a gift out of the bosom*, etc.] Of another, of a rich man, who takes it out from thence, and offers it to him as a bribe. This he takes in the most secret manner, that it might not be seen by others; though the Arabic version renders it, “he that receives a gift in his own bosom commits iniquity”; it is true of both the giver and the receiver; the one gives out of his bosom, and the other takes if from thence, and puts it into his own, and both are wicked. And the words are by some rendered, though it seems contrary to the accents, “a gift out of the bosom of the wicked he will take”^{f506}; the unjust judge, who is bribed with it:

to pervert the ways of judgment; to turn the course of justice, and hinder it from taking place; favouring a bad cause, and pronouncing a wrong sentence, which is wresting judgment.

Ver. 24. *Wisdom [is] before him that hath understanding*, etc.] Is near him, to direct and assist him; it is before him as a rule to walk by, and it is the mark he aims at. A man of spiritual understanding has the book of wisdom before him, the Scriptures of truth, which are able to make a man wise to salvation; and he steers his course according to them; he sets Christ, the Wisdom of God, always before him; and keeps his eye on the mark for the prize, all the while he is running his Christian race: or, “in the face of an understanding man is wisdom”^{f507}; it is to be seen in his countenance, which is grave and composed;

but the eyes of a fool [are] in the ends of the earth; where wisdom is not to be found, it is far off from him; his mind is wandering after every object, is unsettled and unfixed to anything; and which may be discerned in his eyes, which are rolling about and turning, first one way and then another; and which shows the levity and inconstancy of his mind.

Ver. 25. *A foolish son [is] a grief to his father*, etc.] Because of his folly and wickedness, and the ruin he is bringing himself to;

and bitterness to her that bare him; a cause of bitterness of soul to his mother, more distressing than the bitter pains with which she brought him forth into the world. Jarchi, by the father, understands the blessed God; and by her that bare him, the congregation of Israel; to whom Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, was bitterness, who caused Israel to sin; (see ~~2001~~ Proverbs 10:1).

Ver. 26. *Also to punish the just [is] not good*, etc.] It is evil, and an abomination to the Lord, (~~2005~~ Proverbs 17:15). Evildoers indeed should be

punished; but to punish the righteous also, as well as them, is far from being commendable;

[nor] to strike princes for equity: to strike princes, judges, civil magistrates, for doing the duty of their place and office, for doing that which is just and equitable among men, is very criminal, who ought to be encouraged and supported therein. Or it may be rendered, nor “that princes should strike for [that which is] right”^{f508} or cause men to be stricken, scourged, and whipped for doing well. The Targum is,

“nor to smite the righteous, who say right things;”

and so the Syriac version renders it, “righteous ones”; and the word signifies ingenuous liberal persons, good men, such as princes are or ought to be; and who should neither be stricken in the due discharge of their office, nor strike others that do well.

Ver. 27. *He that hath knowledge spareth his words*, etc.] Or, “he that knows knowledge”^{f509}; one that is very knowing, has a fund of knowledge in him, “spareth his words”; is generally a man of few words, he thinks much and says little; and though he may be communicative of his knowledge to proper persons, and at proper times, yet never speaks of it in a boasting and ostentatious way: or, he “restrains his words”^{f510}; he puts a bridle on them; and suffers not himself to speak hastily and angrily, and in a reproachful manner, when he is provoked to it;

[and] a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit; here is a various reading; the “Cetib” is **רְצוּם**, “of a cool spirit”^{f511}; in opposition to a warm fiery spirit; such as was that of the apostles, who were for calling for fire from heaven on those that slighted their master, and, as he told them, knew not what spirits they were of; but a cool spirit is one that is not soon angry, calm, sedate, and not easily provoked to wrath: the “Keri”, or marginal reading, is **רְצוּם**, “of an excellent” or “precious spirit”^{f512}; and such an one is a right spirit; a spirit of faith and love, and of a sound mind; and of such a spirit is a man of understanding in things divine and spiritual; to have a spirit of prayer, and to be tenderhearted, and of a sympathizing and forgiving spirit, is to be of an excellent spirit. The Targum is,

“humble in spirit;”

and a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price; the Lord has a great regard to such who are of an humble and contrite spirit: with

these he dwells, to these he gives more grace; these are like to Christ, and have the fruits of his Spirit, and are very useful and ornamental. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it, “patient” or “longsuffering”; and to be of a patient spirit is to be of an excellent spirit: such bear afflictions and reproaches quietly; wait God’s own time for hearing and helping them, and live in the comfortable expectation of heaven and happiness; and such show themselves to be wise and understanding men.

Ver. 28. *Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise,* etc.] Not only one that is sparing of his words, and is really a man of knowledge and understanding; but even a fool, if he is but silent, and does not betray his folly by his words, will be reckoned a wise man by those that do not know him; and, whatever fool he may be in other respects, yet in this he acts the wise part, that he holds his peace and says nothing;

[and] he that shutteth his lips [is esteemed] a man of understanding; and keeps them shut, lest he should say anything rashly and hastily; a man that has so much command of himself as not to speak unadvisedly, through the heat of his own passions, and through the provocations of others, will pass for a man that understands himself, and knows how to behave well before others.

CHAPTER 18

Ver. 1. *Through desire a man having separated himself, seeketh*, etc.] Or, “a separated man seeketh desire”^{f513}; his own desire, will, and pleasure. This is either to be understood in a good sense, of one that has a real and hearty desire after sound wisdom and knowledge, and seeks in the use of all proper means to attain it; and in order to which he separates himself from the world and the business of it, and retires to his study, and gives up himself to reading, meditation, and prayer; or goes abroad in search of it, as Aben Ezra: or of a vain man that affects singularity; and who, through a desire of gratifying that lust, separates himself, not only from God, as Jarchi interprets it, pursuing his evil imagination and the lust of his heart; and from his friends, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; but from all men, like the Jews, who “please not God, and are contrary to all men”; so such a man sets himself to despise and contradict the sentiments and opinions of others, and to set up his own in opposition to them. This is true of the Pharisees among the Jews, who had their name from separating themselves from all others, having an high opinion of their own Wisdom and sanctify; and also of the Gnostics among the Christians, who boasted of their knowledge, and separated themselves from the Christian assemblies; and were sensual, not having the Spirit, being vainly puffed up with their fleshly mind;

[and] intermeddleth with all wisdom; the man who is desirous of being truly wise and knowing grasps at all wisdom, every branch of useful knowledge; would gladly learn something of every art and science worthy of regard; and he makes use of all means of improving himself therein; and covets the company and conversation of men of wisdom and knowledge, that he may attain to more; he intermingles himself with men of wisdom, as Aben Ezra interprets it, and walks and converses with them. Or if this is to be understood of a vain glorious person, the sense is, “he intermeddles” or “mingles himself with all business”^{f514}, as it may be rendered; he thrusts himself into affairs that do not concern him, and will pass his judgment on things he has nothing to do with; or he monopolizes all knowledge to himself, and will not allow any other to have any share with him. Jarchi interprets this clause thus,

“among wise men his reproach shall be made manifest;”

and observes, that their Rabbins explain it of Lot separating from Abraham, following the desires of his heart: but R. Saadiah Gaon better interprets it of an apostate from religion; that objects to everything solid and substantial, in a wrangling and contentious manner; and “shows his teeth”^{f515} at it, as Schultens, from the use of the Arabic word, renders it.

Ver. 2. *A fool hath no delight in understanding*, etc.] In natural understanding, and in the improvement of his mind in it; he delights not in books, nor in the conversation of men of learning and sense: or in spiritual understanding, in the understanding of spiritual things; these are foolishness to a natural man; nor does he delight in reading the Scriptures, nor in hearing the word, and attendance on it in the house of God, but is weary of such exercises;

but that his heart may discover itself; and the folly that is in it: such men only desire to have some knowledge and understanding, to make a show of it, that they may be thought to be wise, and to be capable of talking of things as if they understood them, when it is only to the exposing of themselves and their ignorance; some persons attain to no more learning and knowledge than just to be capable to show that they are fools. Or, “but in the discovery of his heart”^{f516}; he delights in discovering that; not the wisdom, but the folly that is in it.

Ver. 3. *When the wicked cometh, [then] cometh also contempt*, etc.] When he comes into the world, as Aben Ezra; as soon as he is born, he is liable to contempt, being born in sin; but this is true of all: rather, as the Vulgate Latin, and with which the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions agree, when he cometh into the depth of sin, or to the height of his wickedness; he commences a scoffer at, and condemner of all that is good: when he comes into the house of God, it may be said, “there comes contempt”; for he comes not to hear the word, in order to receive any profit by it, but to contemn it, and the ministers of it;

and with ignominy reproach: or, “with the ignominious man reproach”^{f517}: he that despises all that is good, and treats divine things in a ludicrous way, will not spare to reproach the best of men, and speak evil of them falsely, for the sake of religion. Or the meaning of the whole is, that wicked men, sooner or later, come into contempt, ignominy, and reproach, themselves; they that despise the Lord are lightly esteemed by him; and a vile person is contemned in the eyes of a good man: such bring shame and disgrace upon themselves and families while they live; and, when they die, they are laid in

the grave with dishonour; an infamy rests upon their memories, and they wilt rise to everlasting shame and contempt.

Ver. 4. *The words of a man's mouth [are as] deep waters*, etc.] The words of a great and mighty man; of an excellent and valuable man, as Jarchi; or of a wise man, as Aben Ezra. The doctrines which such a man has imbibed, and his heart is full of and his mouth utters, are like to “waters”, pure, purifying, and refreshing; to “deep waters”, which make no noise, and cannot be easily fathomed: such are the deep mysteries of grace, the wisdom of God in a mystery, spoken among them that are perfect; of which a good man makes no boast, but humbly declares; out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth speaks;

[and] the wellspring of wisdom [as] a flowing brook; there is a spring of spiritual wisdom and knowledge in him; a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life; and from thence it flows freely and constantly; communicating itself liberally unto others, and ministering grace to the hearers, for their edification.

Ver. 5. *[It is] not good to accept the person of the wicked*, etc.] For a judge to have respect to a wicked man in a cause before him, and to favour him, because he is a rich man, or a relation, or he has received some kindness from him; none of these things should have any influence upon him

to overthrow the righteous in judgment: though he may be a poor man and a stranger, and to whom the judge is under no private and personal obligation; yet justice ought to be done without any respect to persons; to do otherwise is not only not good, but very bad, very sinful and criminal; it is contrary to law and justice; it is doing injury to men, and is repugnant to the will of God, and offensive to him, (⁴⁸⁹Leviticus 19:15).

Ver. 6. *A fool's lips enter into contention*, etc.] That is, between others, when he has nothing to do with it; but he must be meddling, and make himself a party in the contention, which is an argument of his folly; he says things which occasion disputes, raise contentions among men, and provoke to wrath and anger. The Septuagint version is, “the lips of a fool lead him to evils”: for, as they lead him to contention and strife, the issue of that is confusion and every evil work;

and his mouth calleth for strokes: as he stirs up and encourages contention, so he proceeds to blows, and excites others to them; from

words he goes to blows, and, by the ill and provoking language of his mouth, gets many a blow to himself. Jarchi seems to understand it of chastisement, from the hand of God; (see ^{<418>}Proverbs 26:3).

Ver. 7. *A fool's mouth [is] his destruction*, etc.] The cause of it; for his contentions, and quarrels, and evil speaking, lawsuits are commenced against him, which bring ruin upon himself and his family now; as well as for his idle and wicked words he will be condemned hereafter, (^{<4125>}Matthew 12:35); there is a world of iniquity in the mouth and tongue of a wicked man, which bring destruction upon himself and others, (^{<3816>}James 3:6,8);

and his lips [are] the snare of his soul; from speaking in his own defence, he says things which should not be said, and by which he is entangled yet more and more; he is caught by his own words and condemned by them; or his loquacity, in which he delights, is a snare unto him to say things which neither become him, nor are for his advantage, but the contrary; (see ^{<4123>}Proverbs 12:13).

Ver. 8. *The words of a talebearer [are] as wounds*, etc.] Or rather they are wounds; they wound the credit and reputation of the person of whom the tale is told; they wound the person to whom it is told, and destroy his love and affection to his friend; and in the issue they wound, hurt, and ruin the talebearer himself. Or, they are “as of those that are wounded”^{f518}; they pretend to be affected with the case they tell, and to be grieved for the failings and infirmities of those they are secretly exposing, when at the same time they rejoice at them: or, they are “secret” hidden ones, as Aben Ezra interprets it; they are spoken secretly, and wound secretly, in a backbiting way: or, they are “smooth” or flattering^{f519}, as Kimchi; they are smoother than oil, and glide easily into the minds of others: rather, “are greedily swallowed down”^{f520}, as the word in the Arabic language signifies; as Schultens has shown, and so renders it. Hence it follows:

and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly; go down pleasantly, and sink deep into the hearts of those to whom they are told; where they have a place and remain, both to the injury of the persons that receive them, and of them of whom they are told; and, though pleasing at first, they are as wounds in the inner parts, which are mortal.

Ver. 9. *He also that is slothful in his work*, etc.] Remiss in it; hangs down his hands, and does not care to make use of them, but neglects his business:

is brother to him that is a great waster: a prodigal man, who spends his substance in riotous living: the sluggard and the prodigal are brethren in iniquity; for, though they take different courses, they are both sinful, and issue in the same manner; both bring to poverty and want. Or, “brother to a master that wastes”^{f521}; a slothful servant and a wasteful master are near akin, and come into the same class and circumstances. Jarchi interprets it,

“he that separateth from the law, though a disciple of a wise man, is a brother to Satan;”

whose name is Apollyon, the waster and destroyer. A man that is slothful in spiritual things, though a professor of religion, and has a place in the house of God, is brother to him that is a waster and persecutor of it; (see ~~4023~~ Matthew 12:30).

Ver. 10. *The name of the Lord [is] a strong tower*, etc.] By “the name of the Lord” may be meant, either the attributes and perfections of God, by which he is made known, and which are the strength and security of his people; his goodness, grace, and mercy, are their defence; his favour encompasses them about, as a shield; his justice protects them from all injuries and insults; his truth and faithfulness preserve them; they are kept by his power, as in a garrison; and his unchangeableness is a reason why they are not consumed: or else the Lord himself; his name is put for himself, (~~4300~~ Psalm 20:1); and may be well interpreted of the Messiah, as it is by the ancient Jew,^{f522}; in and by whom God is manifested unto men as the God of grace; in whom he proclaims his name, a God gracious and merciful; whose name is in him, and who has the same nature and perfections with him; his name is Jehovah, our righteousness; Immanuel, God with us; the mighty God, and Prince of peace; and who is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins, and so is their security from eternal destruction. What a strong tower is to them that are within it, against an enemy without, that is the power, strength, and might of Christ to his people; as a divine Person, he is strong and mighty, the most mighty, the Almighty; as man, he is the man of God’s right hand, made strong for himself and us; as Mediator, he has all power in heaven and earth: in him is everlasting strength for his people; he is their Betzer, their fortified place, or city of refuge, to flee unto on all occasions; he is the strong hold,

whither prisoners of hope are directed to turn to; he is their place of defence, and the munition of rocks; a strong tower, inexpugnable; so deeply founded, no enemy can work under it; and plant a mine to blow it up; so highly built; no scaling ladders can reach it; so fortified, no cannon balls can break through it, or demolish any of its walls and bulwarks, which are his salvation; the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; it is not to be taken by storm, or by the most violent attack of the whole posse of men and devils;

the righteous runneth into it; not self-righteous persons, they run from Christ and his righteousness, not to him and that; but such who see their own righteousness will not justify them; who indeed are sinners, know and acknowledge themselves to be such; as sinners go to Christ, who, as such, receives them; and these are righteous through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and live soberly, righteously, and godly: and it is the continual business or employment of their faith to betake themselves to Christ upon all occasions; they are continually coming to him, and exercising faith upon him, as the Lord their righteousness, which is meant by “running” to him; this supposes knowledge of him, as the strong tower and city of refuge; of the way unto him, and of the reception by him which may be expected; it supposes a principle of spiritual life, and some degree of spiritual strength; a sense of danger or of want in themselves, and of safety and fulness in Christ; it is expressive of haste, readiness, and cheerfulness, and is owing to the drawings of efficacious grace;

and such an one that thus runs

is safe; from the avenging justice of God; from the curse and condemnation of the law; from sin, and all its dreadful consequences; from Satan, and all spiritual enemies; from wrath to come, hell, and the second death: or is “set aloft”^{f523}; is on high; for this tower, as it is a strong one, it is a high one; a rock of refuge, higher than men, or angels, or heaven itself; and such who are in it are out of the reach of all danger and every enemy.

Ver. 11. *The rich man’s wealth [is] his strong city*, etc.] In which he dwells, over which he presides; in which he places his trust and confidence, and thinks himself safe from every enemy and from all trouble: as one^{f524} observes,

“the abundance of a rich man’s wealth he conceives to be as it were the abundance of people in a “city”; the telling of his money he

imagines to be the walking of people up and down the streets; his bags standing thick together to be so many houses standing close one to the other; his iron barred chests to be so many bulwarks; his bonds and bills to be his cannons and demi-cannons, his great ordinance; and in the midst of these he thinketh himself environed with a “great wall”, which no trouble is able to leap over, which no misery is able to break through.”

As it follows;

and as a high wall in his own conceit: which not only separates and distinguishes him from others; but, as he imagines, will secure him from all dangers, and will be abiding, lasting, and durable: but all this is only “in his own conceit”, or “imagery”^{f525}; in the chambers of his imagery, as Jarchi, referring to (^{<3182>}Ezekiel 8:12); where the same word is used; for this wall shall not stand; these riches cannot secure themselves, they take wing and fly away; and much less the owner of them, not from public calamities, nor from personal diseases of body, nor from death, nor from wrath to come.

Ver. 12. *Before destruction the heart of man is haughty*, etc.] Lifted up with his riches. Rich men are apt to be highminded, and therefore are to be charged and cautioned against it; they are apt to look above their poor neighbours, and with contempt upon them; and very often this haughtiness of theirs is a presage of their ruin and destruction: and those haughty airs are put on from the pride of their hearts, when a “breach” is near, as the word^{f526} signifies, or when they are ready to break; however, their haughty spirits are, sooner or later, humbled by one distressing providence or another; (see ^{<3168>}Proverbs 16:18);

and before honour [is] humility; (see Gill on “^{<3153>}Proverbs 15:33”).

Ver. 13. *He that answereth a matter before he heareth [it]*, etc.] Who is impatient, and cannot wait to hear it out, but breaks in upon the speaker before he has finished what he has to say; or is rash and precipitate, and returns an answer at once, without weighing and considering, and thoroughly understanding, what is said:

it [is] folly and shame unto him; his answer must be a foolish one, and bring shame and confusion upon him; men should be “swift to hear”, and “slow to speak”, (^{<3009>}James 1:9).

Ver. 14. *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity*, etc.] The spirit of a mighty man, as Jarchi; a man of spirit, that has a spirit of fortitude, even of natural fortitude, and especially of Christian fortitude; that has a spirit of might upon him, of power, and sound mind; a man of a Christian spirit, that is renewed in the spirit of his mind; who is a spiritual man, and has the Spirit of God in him, as well as a rational soul, an immaterial, immortal, and never dying substance. Such a man will bear up under many trials and exercises of life; will support under bodily infirmities; will take patiently the loss Of friends and of substance; endure reproach, and the loss of a good name, credit, and reputation, cheerfully, for righteousness's sake; and suffer persecution for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, with an undaunted and unbroken spirit: the peace of conscience he feels within; the presence of God with him; the love of God shed abroad in his heart; seeing all his afflictions flowing from love, and working for his good; and having in view the glories of another world; he bears up under and goes through all afflictions with ease and pleasure; his conscience is clear, his heart is whole, his mind is easy; his wounds being healed, his sins pardoned, and his soul saved in Chris;

but a wounded spirit who can bear? or a “smitten”^{f527} one, smitten by the Lord; by the word of the Lord, which he uses as a hammer to break rocky hearts in pieces; by the law of God, which produces wrath, and a looking for of fiery indignation; by the Spirit of God, awakening the conscience, and convicting it of sin, righteousness, and judgment; which smitings are very grievous, though they tend to bring to repentance; are in order to healing, and are in love. Or, “a broken spirit”^{f528}, as in (¹⁷²Proverbs 17:22); broken with a sense of sin, and with an excess of sorrow for it; when a man becomes lifeless and hopeless, has no hope of life and salvation, and is in the utmost confusion; all his measures and purposes are broken, as well as his heart; he knows not what to do, nor what way to take; he is disconsolate, and refuses to be comforted; and which for the present is intolerable: though the Lord has a regard to such, is nigh unto them; has sent his son to bind up their broken hearts; yea, has himself been broken for them; and happy it is for them that they fall on him and are broken, and not he on them. Or, “a wounded spirit”; with a view of sin, as committed against the omniscient and omnipotent Being, a pure and holy God; a righteous one, whose nature is infinite; and so sin committed against him requires an infinite satisfaction, which a creature cannot give; and a God also, who is the author of their beings, and the Father of their mercies; all

which makes sin against him the more cutting and wounding: likewise they are wounded with a view of the evil nature of sin, and the aggravated circumstances that attend it; and with the terrors of the law, that are set in array against them. And such a spirit “who can bear?” not without the sight of a wounded Saviour; or without a view of atonement by his sacrifice; or without the discoveries and applications of pardoning grace; or without a sense of peace and reconciliation made by the blood of Christ; or without some hope of salvation by him; and unless the good Samaritan pours in oil and wine into the wounds, and binds them up.

Ver. 15. *The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge*, etc.] More knowledge; for he must have some, and a considerable share, to be denominated “prudent”, whether in things natural, civil, or spiritual: and such will be heartily desirous of more, and make use of all means to attain it, by which they do come at a large share of it;

and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge; a wise man seeks to get it by hearing; he listens to what others say, and especially such that are wiser and more knowing than himself: so such as are wise to salvation, as they desire to know more of Christ and of divine things, and make use of all means for that purpose; among the rest, hearken to what Christians, of a superior class to themselves, drop in private conversation; and particularly they constantly attend to the ministry of the word; and thus seeking it, they find an increase of it.

Ver. 16. *A man’s gift maketh room for him*, etc.] Or “enlarges him”^{f529}; brings him out of prison, or, or out of straits and difficulties with which he, has, been pressed; or it makes way for him to a judge, and for a favourable hearing of his cause; or it enlarges his acquaintance, and gains him respect among men;

and bringeth him before great men; it opens a way for him into the presence and company of great men, being a fee to their servants; or with it he procures a place to wait on them. It is not necessary to understand it of a gift by way of bribe; but to introduce a person to another, and render him acceptable, and appease anger; as in the cases of Jacob and Abigail, (⁽⁻⁰³²⁰⁾Genesis 32:20 43:11 ⁽⁻⁰³²⁷⁾1 Samuel 25:27).

Ver. 17. *He that is first in his own cause [seemeth] just*, etc.] As perhaps Tertullus did, before Paul made his defence; and as Ziba, Mephibosheth’s servant, before his master detected him: this often appears true in telling a

tale, in private conversation, in lawsuits before a judge and a court of judicature, and in theological controversies;

but his neighbour cometh, and searcheth him; his neighbour comes into the house, where he is telling his tale, and reports it in another manner, and shows the falsehood of his relation; or he comes into a court of judicature, and sets the cause in quite another light; or he comes out into the world by public writing, and exposes the errors of a man engaged in a wrong cause, and refutes his arguments. It is generally understood of judicial affairs, that the first that opens a cause is very apt to prejudice the judge and court in his favour, and they are ready to think at first hearing that he is in the right; but it is not proper to be hasty in forming a judgment till the other side is heard; for his antagonist comes and traverses the point, unravels the whole affair, shows the weakness of his cause, the vanity of his pretences, and makes void all his allegations; and then “he”, the judge, so some interpret it, “searcheth”; inquires more narrowly into the case, in order to find out truth, and pass a right judgment and sentence.

Ver. 18. *The lot causeth contentions to cease*, etc.] When a case cannot be determined among parties at variance in a private way, nor in a court of judicature, the lot is cast, and that puts an end to all strife, and makes each party easy; they submit to it, and acquiesce in it;

and parteth between the mighty; the kings and princes of the earth; men of great power and authority, and of great riches and affluence; and so in a capacity of contending with each other, and of prolonging the contention, which may be attended with bad consequences; and who are not easily dissuaded from it: or it may intend such who most vehemently disagree; persons of great spirits, who are obstinate and stubborn, and will by no means yield, and there is no parting them by arguments or legal decisions; these the lot parts, and causes them to cease from their quarrels and contentions, and to rest satisfied with the distributions the lot makes to them; as the children of Israel were with their portion of the land of Canaan, assigned them by lot.

Ver. 19. *A brother offended [is harder to be won] than a strong city*, etc.] A fortified city may sooner be taken by an enemy, than one brother offended can be reconciled to another; their resentments against each other are keener than against another person that has offended them; and their love being turned into hatred, it is more bitter; and it is more difficult to compose differences between brethren than between enemies; wherefore

such should take care that they fall not out by the way: this is true of brethren in a natural sense; as the cases of Abel and Cain, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brethren, Amnon and Absalom, and others, show; and of brethren in a spiritual sense, as Paul and Barnabas, Luther and Calvin, and others;

and [their] contentions [are] like the bars of a castle: which cannot be easily broken or cut asunder: so contentions, especially those among brethren, are with great difficulty made to cease, and their differences composed; they will stand it out against one another as long as a strong city, or a barred castle, against an enemy.

Ver. 20. *A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth,* etc.] With his own words and discourses, when they are prudent, pious, and savoury; when they are with grace, and minister it; they are satisfying to himself, to his own mind and conscience, and to his family; to all within his house, which is, as it were, his belly; but, if otherwise, it will not be profitable nor satisfying to either; and therefore, if a man would keep conscience easy, and be useful to others, he ought to take care what he says; (see ^{<1024>}Proverbs 12:14 13:2);

[and] with the increase of his lips shall he be filled; the same thing as before, expressed in different words, alluding to the sowing, of seed in the earth, and the increase of it; as a man sows he reaps, and enjoys the fruits of his labour; according to what a man sows with his lips, such is his harvest he is afterwards a partaker of.

Ver. 21. *Death and life [are] in the power of the tongue,* etc.] Of witnesses, according to the testimony they bear; of judges, according to the sentence they pass; of teachers, according to the doctrine they preach; of all men, who, by their well or ill speaking, bring death or life to themselves and others. Some, by their tongues, by the too free use of them, or falsehood they utter, are the cause of death to themselves and others; and some, by their silence, or by their prudent speech and prevalent intercession, secure or obtain life for themselves and others; yea, judgment at the last day will proceed according to a man's words, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned", (^{<1025>}Matthew 12:37); the tongue is the instrument either of a great deal of good, or of a great deal of evil;

and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof; that delight to be talkative; that love to use the tongue, whether in a good or in a bad way, shall accordingly be recompensed; shall enjoy the advantages or disadvantages arising from it.

Ver. 22. [*Whoso findeth a wife*, etc.] A good one; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, supply it; and so the Targum, though it leaves out the word good in the last clause; and no other can be meant, even a good natured one, wise, prudent, careful, and industrious; a proper helpmeet, a virtuous woman, as in (^{אביו} Proverbs 31:10); whoso seeks after such an one, and finds one, especially one that has the grace of God, which he should seek after among his friends, and by their assistance, and by prayer to God:

findeth a good [thing]; that will be good for him, both upon a civil and spiritual account; the Septuagint version adds,

“he that casts out a good wife casts out good things, but he that retains a whore is foolish and ungodly;”

which is followed by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, but is not in the Hebrew text. Jarchi interprets it of the law in a mystic sense, but, according to the literal sense, of a good wife;

and obtaineth favour of the Lord; it is from the Lord, and under his direction and guidance in seeking, that he finds a good wife; and which he ought to esteem as a favour from the Lord, and as an evidence of his favour to him, and may encourage himself to hope for others of him^{f530} Hesiod says, a man cannot obtain anything better than a good wife.

Ver. 23. *The poor useth entreaties*, etc.] Or “supplications”^{f531}; he is an humble supplicant to others for favours he asks in a submissive and lowly manner; he does not demand anything, nor prescribe what shall be done for him, but modestly tells his case, and submits it; so such who are poor in spirit are humble supplicants at the throne of grace;

but the rich answereth roughly; being proud and haughty, lifted up with their riches, and in fear of none, they answer others with hard and rough words, especially their inferiors, and particularly the poor. This is not what ought to be, but what commonly is. This verse and (^{אביו} Proverbs 18:24) are not in the Arabic version.

Ver. 24. *A man [that hath] friends must show himself friendly, etc.]*

Friendship ought to be mutual and reciprocal, as between David and Jonathan; a man that receives friendship ought to return it, or otherwise he is guilty of great ingratitude. This may be spiritually applied; a believer is “a man of friends”^{f532}, as it may be rendered; he has many friends: God is his friend, as appears by his early love to him, his choice of him, and provisions of grace for him; by sending his son to save him; by visiting him, not only in a way of providence, but of grace; by disclosing his secrets, showing his covenant to him, and by making him his heir, and a joint heir with Christ. Christ is his friend, as is evident from his visiting him at his incarnation; and in a spiritual way, by the communication of his secrets to him; by his hearty counsel and faithful reproofs; by his undertaking and doing for him what he has; and especially by suffering and dying in his room and stead. The Holy Spirit is his friend, which he has shown by discovering to him his woeful estate by nature, and the way of salvation by Christ; by working all his works in him; by acting the part of a Comforter to him; by revealing divine things to him, by helping him under all his infirmities; by making intercession for him according to the will of God; and by making him meet for eternal glory and happiness: angels are his friends, as is plain by their well pleasedness with the incarnation of Christ for men; and which they express at their conversion; by their ministering to them, their protection of them, and the good offices they do them both in life and at death; and saints are friends to one another: and such should show themselves friendly to God, their covenant God and Father; by frequently visiting him at the throne of grace; by trusting in him; by a carefulness not to offend, but please him; and by a close and faithful adherence to his cause and interest: to Jesus Christ their Redeemer, by a ready obedience to his commands; by owning and using him as their friend; by taking notice of his friends, and showing them respect, his ministers and poor saints; by cleaving to him, and renouncing the friendship of his enemies: and likewise to the Holy Spirit, by not grieving, quenching, and despising him; but by making use of him, and giving up themselves to his influence and direction; and by acknowledging him as the author of all their grace: also to angels, by speaking well of them, owning their good offices, and reckoning it an honour that they are come and joined to such a company; and to the saints, by Christian conversation with them, by sympathizing with them in all conditions, by hearty counsel, faithful reproofs and admonitions, and by helping them in every distress, inward and outward;

and there is a friend [that] sticketh closer than a brother; who is to a man as his own soul, (^{f533}Deuteronomy 13:6); and so are of one heart and soul, as Jonathan and David, and the first Christians, were; this is true of Christ, and may be expressive of the close union between him and his people; and of his close adherence to their cause and interest; and of his constancy and continuance as a friend at all times; and of his faithfulness and unchangeableness as such; (see ^{f533}Proverbs 17:17). The Heathens had a deity which presided over friendship, which they called Jupiter Philios^{f533}: the character best agrees with the true God, who is a friend to men himself, and loves friendship among them.

CHAPTER 19

Ver. 1. *Better [is] the poor that walketh in his integrity,* etc.] In the uprightness of his heart before God and men; who is sincere in the worship of God, and in the profession of his name, and walks in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; and is upright, harmless, and inoffensive in his conversation with men; and studies to exercise a conscience void of offence to both, and continues herein. A man may be a poor man with respect to worldly things, and yet be rich towards God; may be a truly gracious good man, honest, sincere, and upright in heart and life: and such an one is better

than [he that] is perverse in his lips, and is a fool; that is, than a rich man, as the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions supply it, and as the antithesis requires; “that is perverse in his lips”, or “whose ways are perverse”, as the Syriac version; that acts the deceitful part both by words and actions towards those that are about him, not being honest and plain hearted as the poor man is; and who uses those beneath him very roughly; and concerning oppression speaks loftily, and lets his tongue run both against God in heaven and man on earth, by which he shows he is a fool: for his riches do not give him wisdom; and his words and actions declare he wants it; men may be poor, and yet wise; and a matt may be rich, and yet a fool: or is confident^{f534}; that is, trusts in his riches, and is opposed to a poor man, so R. Saadiah Gaon. This verse and (~~20102~~ Proverbs 19:2) are not in the Septuagint and Arabic versions.

Ver. 2. *Also, [that] the soul [be] without knowledge, [it is] not good,* etc.] Without knowledge of things natural and civil, especially without the knowledge of God and Christ, and divine and spiritual things; to be without this is not good, yea, very bad; for men without such knowledge and understanding are, like the beasts that perish, and for lack of it do. Jarchi interprets it, without the law. Or, “to be without the knowledge of the soul is not good”^{f535}; so the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions,

“he that knoweth not his soul, it is not good for him;”

that does not know he has a soul, or however takes no more care of it than if he had none; who knows not the worth and value of it, its state and

condition, and the danger it is in, and the only way of attaining the salvation of it;

and he that hasteth with [his] feet sinneth; who engages in anything ignorantly and rashly, he misses the mark, and fails in the performance of it, for want of due consideration and care. The Targum is,

“he that is swift with his feet to evil is a sinner;”

whose feet run to evil, to commit robbery, as Aben Ezra; or to shed blood; (see ²⁰¹¹⁶Proverbs 1:16).

Ver. 3. *The foolishness of man perverteth his way*, etc.] The sinfulness of his heart and nature; the folly which is bound up in it causes him to go astray out of the way in which he should go, or makes things go cross with him; so that the ways he takes do not prosper, nor his schemes succeed; but everything goes against him, and he is brought into straits and difficulties;

and his heart fretteth against the Lord; laying all the blame on him; and ascribing his ill success, not to his own sin and folly, but to divine Providence, which works against him; and therefore frets and murmurs at him; and, instead of charging his own ways with folly, charges the ways of God with inequality; (see ²³⁸²⁵Ezekiel 18:25 ²¹¹¹⁶Jude 1:16).

Ver. 4. *Wealth maketh many friends*, etc.] Or “adds”^{f536}; it increases the number of them: so the poet^{f537}, “donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos”; and to this agrees what the wise man says, (²¹⁴²⁰Proverbs 14:20);

but the poor is separated from his neighbour; or “friend”^{f538}; he will not visit him as he did in his prosperity, nor suffer him to come into his house or company, or come near him; he is separated from his affection, friendship, and presence: so another poet^{f539},

“if thou art rich, thou wilt have many friends; but, if poor, few.”

Ver. 5. *A false witness shall not be unpunished*, etc.] He that bears false witness against his neighbour in an open court of judicature; though he may not be detected by men, and so escape the punishment due to such offenders by the laws of God and men; yet God, who knows all hearts and actions, will not suffer him to go with impunity; if not punished in this world, he shall be in the world to come; for bearing false witness, or perjury, is a grievous offence to God;

and [he that] speaketh lies shall not escape; even he that useth himself to lying in private conversation shall not escape the reproach of men; for nothing is more scandalous than lying; nor the wrath of God, such shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, (⁶²⁰⁸Revelation 21:8).

Ver. 6. *Many will entreat the favour of the prince*, etc.] Or of the liberal and bountiful man; as kings and princes generally are, (⁴²²⁵Luke 22:25); such have many to wait upon them, and are humble petitioners to them. Aben Ezra and Gersom interpret the many of great and honourable men, who are courtiers to kings and princes; who wait upon them, ask favours of them, and seek for places under them. The Targum is,

“there are many that minister before a prince;”

he has many servants, and some of them nobles;

and every man [is] a friend to him that giveth gifts; or “to a man of gift”^{f540}: who has it in his power to give, and has a heart to it; who is both a rich man and a liberal man; who is both able and willing to communicate to the necessities of others: such a man not only has the poor his friends, but others will speak well of him, and will make application to him on account of the poor; and, for the sake of doing good to them, will court his friendship and acquaintance. Bayne interprets this “man of gift” of Christ, who ascended on high, and received gifts for men, and gives them to men.

Ver. 7. *All the brethren of the poor do hate him*, etc.] They despise him on account of his poverty; they neglect him, and do not take care of him; they reckon him a reproach unto them, and do not choose to own him; all which may be interpreted an hatred of him;

how much more do his friends go far from him? or “his friend”, every one of his friends; or “his neighbour”^{f541}: for if his brethren, who are his own flesh and blood, show so much disrespect unto him; much more will those who are only his neighbours, or were in friendship with him while in prosperity; these wilt stand at a distance from him, and not come near him, now he is poor and in distress; (see ⁸⁹³Job 19:13,14);

he pursueth [them with] words; [yet] they are wanting [to him]; or, “they [are] not”^{f542}; he presses them with earnest entreaties to relieve him; he urges their own words and promises, and fetches arguments from them, and uses them as far as they will go; but all signifies nothing; his own

words and petitions are to no purpose; and their words and promises are all smoke and vapour, vain and empty. Some understand this, as Gersom, not of the poor man that follows vain words^{f543} and empty promises, and buoys himself up with them that such an one and such an one has promised to be his friend, of which nothing comes; but of the friend that separates from the poor man, and pursues him with words of accusation, charging it on him as his own fault that he is poor; which accusations are not true. This is one of the fifteen places observed by the Masoretes, in which it is written **al** , “not”, and read **wl** , “to him”: both may be retained, and read, “they [are] not to him”^{f544}; not profitable to him; either his own words, his petitions; or the words of others, their promises.

Ver. 8. *He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul*, etc.] Wisdom and knowledge in things natural and civil; and especially in things divine, spiritual, and evangelical; particularly he that gets Christ, the Wisdom of God, and a saving knowledge of him; (see ^{<1083>}Proverbs 3:13). Or, “he that getteth a heart”^{f545}; a good heart, as the Targum explains it; which is a new heart, and a new spirit; a clean heart and a right spirit; a heart of flesh, a soft, tender, and contrite one, in opposition to a hard heart, a heart of stone: a wise and understanding heart, such an one as Solomon had; a heart to know the Lord, and to fear him; in which his laws are written, the graces of his Spirit are implanted; and in which God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, dwell: he who is desirous of such a heart seeks after it, prays for it, and uses all means to obtain it; and who, through the grace of God; does possess it, as the word signifies; he by all this shows that he has a regard to the good and welfare of his immortal soul; when such, who indulge to ignorance and a wicked heart, wrong and hate their own souls; see (^{<1024>}Proverbs 29:24);

he that keepeth understanding shall find good; retains the wisdom he has got; holds fast instruction, and keeps it, which is committed to him; abides by the doctrines of the Gospel, and does not depart from them; keeps the ordinances of it, which it is his wisdom and understanding to do; (see ^{<1046>}Deuteronomy 4:6); he finds his account in all this; he finds that which is good, good for him now and hereafter; he finds Christ, and life in him; peace, joy, and comfort in this world: and, in the world to come, glory, honour, and happiness.

Ver. 9. *A false witness shall not be unpunished*, etc.] (See Gill on “^{<1095>}Proverbs 19:5”);

and [he that] speaketh lies shall perish; or “be lost”, shall be undone for ever; he shall not enter into the holy city, but have his part in the lake of fire: they that speak lies in hypocrisy, doctrinal ones, and are given up to believe and profess them, such shall be damned, (^{<3011>}2 Thessalonians 2:11,12).

Ver. 10. *Delight is not seemly for a fool*, etc.] Such an one as Nabal, whose name and nature were alike; and whose prosperity ill became him, and the mirth and delight he had in it, (^{<0255>}1 Samuel 25:25,36); for, as the wise man elsewhere says, “the prosperity of fools shall destroy them”, (^{<3003>}Proverbs 1:26); they do not know how to make a right use of their prosperity; nor to moderate their enjoyments, pleasures, and delights. Some understand this of spiritual delight in the Lord; in his ways and ordinances, which wicked men are strangers to: and a very uncomely thing it is for such persons to talk of spiritual joy and delight, and of their communion with God, when they live in sin;

much less for a servant to have rule over princes; this was a sight which Solomon had seen, but was very disagreeable to him; and was one of the four things the earth cannot bear; the insolence of a servant, when he becomes master over his superiors, is intolerable; see (^{<3182>}Proverbs 30:22 ^{<2107>}Ecclesiastes 10:7). It may be spiritually applied to such who are servants of sin; to whose sensual appetites and carnal affections the more noble and princely powers of the soul, the understanding and mind, become subject; which is very improper and unseemly.

Ver. 11. *The discretion of a man deferreth his anger*, etc.] That he does not show it immediately; but takes time to consider of the offence given him, and makes use of a proper time to resent what is fit should be resented; he is a wise and discreet man that is slow to anger, (^{<3142>}Proverbs 14:29 16:32). He is most like to God, who is “longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth”, (^{<0346>}Exodus 34:6); and it is to the honour of his “name” that he “defers [his] anger”, and “refrains from” cutting off those that offend him, (^{<2389>}Isaiah 48:9);

and [it is] his glory to pass over a transgression; to forgive an offence committed; it is the duty and interest of a man to do so, and it is to his honour; as the contrary greatly reflects dishonour on him, and tends to his disgrace and reproach, if not to his ruin; see (^{<4082>}Matthew 18:32-35).

Ver. 12. *The king's wrath [is] as the roaring of a lion*, etc.] Which is very terrible when hungry, and is after its prey, and has got it. Kings, especially tyrannical ones, are compared to lions; as Nebuchadnezzar by Jeremiah, (³⁰⁴⁷Jeremiah 4:17 50:17); and Nero by the Apostle Paul, (³⁰⁴⁷2 Timothy 4:7); and the rage of such is very dreadful, as Ahasuerus's was to Haman. Jarchi interprets the king, of the holy blessed God. It may be applied to Jesus Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah; who is said to cry with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and whose wrath is terrible to wicked men, and even to the kings of the earth, (⁶¹⁸⁵Revelation 5:5 10:3 6:15-17);

but his favour [is] as dew upon the grass; which refreshes and revives it, and causes it to grow and flourish: and so the favour and good will of a king to his subjects delights them, and causes joy and cheerfulness in them; and such an effect has the love of God and Christ on the children of men, (³⁸⁴⁶Hosea 14:6).

Ver. 13. *A foolish son [is] the calamity of his father*, etc.] Or, “the calamities of his father”^{f546}; he brings them to him. A very great affliction he is, and which has many distresses and sorrows in it; as loss of reputation and credit in his family, which is sunk by his behaviour, instead of being supported and increased; loss of substance, through extravagance and riotous living, and the ruin of his soul and body by his wicked practices; (see ³⁰⁰⁸Proverbs 10:1);

and the contentions of a wife [are] a continual dropping; or like the dropping of rain, in a rainy day, into a house out of repair, and which is very uncomfortable to, the inhabitants of it; (see ³⁰⁷⁵Proverbs 27:15). Such are the contentions of a peevish, ill natured, and brawling wife, who is always scolding; and which is a continual vexation to a man, and renders him very uneasy in life: such a continual dropping was Xantippe to Socrates, who teased him night and day with her brawls and contentions^{f547}. A great unhappiness each of these must be!

Ver. 14. *Houses and riches [are] the inheritance of fathers*, etc.] Which they are careful to provide and leave to their children. This they may and often do, build or purchase houses, and procure great riches, and put their children into the possession of them;

and, or but,

a prudent wife [is] from the Lord; one that behaves well to her husband, manages the affairs of her house with wisdom, and brings up her children

in all orderly manner: such a wife no man has from the care and provision of his parents; nor so much from his own good choice and industry as from the kind providence of God, to which he should ascribe it; his parents may give him houses and lands, but it is God that gives him a wise and discreet woman to be an helpmeet to him; see (⁴¹⁸²Proverbs 18:22).

Ver. 15. *Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep*, etc.] Slothful persons are generally sleepy, and are very desirous of sleep, and indulge themselves in it; they spend their time, day and night, in sleep and drowsiness; and are quite careless and unconcerned about either their temporal or eternal good; (see ⁴¹⁶⁹Proverbs 6:9-11);

and an idle soul shall suffer hunger; and perish with it, both in a temporal and spiritual sense: an idle person, that will not work, ought not to eat; and an idle soul, or one that is unconcerned about his soul, and the spiritual food of it, shall perish for want of it.

Ver. 16. *He that keepeth the commandment*, etc.] Either of parents, as children ought to do; or of masters, as servants should; or of kings and princes, as is the duty of subjects in all things lawful: or rather of God; every command of his, whether of a moral or positive nature, which, though they cannot be perfectly kept, yet should as much as in man lies, in faith, from a principle of love, and to the glory of God: and such a man

keepeth his own soul, or “observes”^{f548} it; he shows that he has a concern for its welfare and peace; for though peace does not arise from keeping the commandments of God, yet such have great peace of soul who do love and keep the law of God; though there is no reward for, yet there is a reward in keeping the divine commands; though salvation is not hereby, yet blessed are they that do his commands; by which it appears they have a right to enter into the city, into eternal happiness, (⁴¹⁹⁶Psalm 119:165 19:11 ⁴⁶²⁴Revelation 22:14);

[but] he that despiseth his ways: which are at and proper for him to walk in, as Aben Ezra observes; or who is negligent of his ways, does not care in what ways he walks, or what is the issue of them; he walks in the ways of his own heart, and in the sight of his eyes; has his conversation according to the course of this world; walks with a multitude, with a crowd, to do evil, in the broad road which leads to destruction, and yet is quite careless about it: or that despises the ways of the commandment or word of God, which that directs to; for that is a lamp and a light, which men would do

well to take heed to, as it shows them the ways in which they should walk; but these they neglect and contemn: or he that despises the ways of God, the ways he himself takes in the salvation of men, all whose ways are mercy and truth; that despises the ways of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Jesus Christ: he

shall die; he is dead in sins already, and he shall die the second death, that neglects and despises so great salvation, and all the ways of the Lord, (^{<SIB>}Hebrews 2:3 10:26-29). There is a “Keri”, or marginal reading, which we follow; but the “Cetib”, or written text, is, “he shall be killed”, or put to death; and so the Syriac version; immediately, by the hand of heaven, by the Lord himself, before his time; or by the judges and civil magistrates; his sins being openly known, as Aben Ezra.

Ver. 17. *He that hath pity unto the poor lendeth unto the Lord*, etc.] A man, whose heart is full of compassion to the poor, and whose hands distribute to their necessities, from a true principle of love and charity to men, and with a view to the glory of God, and not from any selfish principle and with an end; such a man’s gift to the poor is a loan to the Lord; it is not cast away upon the creature, but is a “depositum” in the hands of God, and shall be returned with advantage;

and that which he hath given will, he pay him again; either in this life, in things temporal and spiritual, increasing his worldly substance, blessing his posterity, granting him larger measures of grace, indulging him with his gracious presence, and giving him peace of mind, which passeth all understanding; or in the world to come; not as a reward of debt, but of grace; (see ^{<SIB>}Ecclesiastes 11:1,2 ^{<SIB>}Matthew 10:42 25:35).

Ver. 18. *Chasten thy son while there is hope*, etc.] Of guiding and keeping him in the right way, as long as corrections are or can be hoped to be of use; while in a state of infancy, childhood, and youth; while under parental government; and before habits in sin are grown strong, and the case become desperate, and he is hardened, and proof against all instruction and discipline;

and let not thy soul spare for his crying; the noise he makes, the tears he sheds, the entreaties he uses to keep off the rod; let not a foolish pity and tenderness prevail to lay it aside on that account the consequence of which may be bad to parent and child; see (^{<SIB>}Proverbs 13:24 23:13,14). The Targum is,

“but unto his death do not lift up thy soul;”

or to the slaying of him^{f549}, as the Vulgate Latin version; and this sense Jarchi gives into: and then the meaning is, that though parents should be careful to give due correction to their children, so long as there is hope of doing them good, yet not in a brutal and barbarous manner, to the endangering of their lives: as some parents are too indolent, mild, and gentle, as Eli was; others are too wrathful and furious and use no moderation in their corrections, but unmercifully beat their children; such extremes ought to be avoided. Gersom interprets the word of crying, as we do.

Ver. 19. *A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment*, etc.] Either a child that is of a wrathful disposition, and provokes his parent to wrath; or a parent that chastises his child in wrath; each shall suffer for it; or any man that gives way to wrath and anger and is continually quarrelling, he involves himself in trouble; and is punished, as his offence requires, according to law, either in his person or estate;

for if thou deliver [him], yet thou must do it again; if he is got out of one broil, he will get into another quickly; if he clear of one lawsuit, another will be commenced against him in a short time; if he is discharged and freed from a penalty he is justly subject to, it must be done again and again; he will fall into the same evil, and there is no end of appearing, for him and serving him; a wrathful man brings himself into great trouble, as may be seen in Shimei, (~~1007~~2 Samuel 16:7) (~~1006~~1 Kings 2:46).

Ver. 20. *Hear counsel, and receive instruction*, etc.] Of parents, masters, and ministers; especially the counsel and instruction of Wisdom, of Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of God, the wonderful Counsellor; and of his Gospel and of the Scriptures, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation;

that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end; in the latter end of life, at death; that then it may appear a man has been so wise as to be concerned for a future state, for the good of his soul in another world; by listening to the counsel and instruction of Christ, in his word; by looking to him, and believing in him, for life and salvation; by leaning and living upon him; and committing the affairs of his soul, and the salvation of it, to him.

Ver. 21. *[There are] many devices in a man's heart*, etc.] Some about civil things; to get wealth and riches: to obtain honour and glory among men; to attain to a long life, and to perpetuate their memories after death:

some about sinful things; to gratify their carnal lusts and sensual appetites; and to do mischief to others, particularly the people of God, and the cause and interest of Christ: some about religious things; coming new doctrines, devising new ordinances and modes of worship; contriving other methods of salvation than by Christ; as by the light of nature; by the law of Moses; by mere morality, civility, and external justice between man and man; by keeping to the religion they were born and brought up in; and by a mere outward profession of religion, and submission to ordinances, and performance of duties, and a multitude more of the like kind;

nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand; and can never be frustrated by the devices of man's heart, though there are many, and that but one; (see ^{<4330>}Psalm 33:10,11 ^{<3460>}Isaiah 46:10). This may be applied to the Gospel, and the scheme of salvation in it, called the whole counsel of God, (^{<407>}Acts 20:27); it being the fruit of infinite wisdom, and the effect of a divine council between the eternal Three, and full of the best advice and instructions to the sons of men; and which has stood, and shall stand, notwithstanding the persecutions of wicked men, the craft of false teachers, and the ridicule of a profane world; it will continue till all the elect are gathered in, even, to the end of the world; and so will the ordinances of it, which are also called the counsel of God, (^{<4070>}Luke 7:30); and which will continue till the second coming of Christ. Moreover, the purposes of God, his counsels of old, or his eternal decrees, may be here meant; which are wisely formed in his own breast, and are not frustrable; and according to which counsel of his will all things are done in nature, providence, and grace; all things in this world are ordered as he pleases, and all things are done as he has ordered them; all his purposes are or will be fulfilled; his designs will be accomplished in the world and in his church, in spite of all the schemes, contrivances, and opposition of men and devils.

Ver. 22. *The desire of a man [is] his kindness,* etc.] Either the grace and kindness of God, which is, desirable by every sensible man, as being most excellent, and better than life and anything in it; or it is his desire to show kindness. A good man is desirous of riches, that he might have it in the power of his hands to do good to others; and a beneficent man, who has it in his power, is desirous of an opportunity of showing kindness to his fellow creatures and friends; and such a disposition and conduct render a man very desirable and amiable; it is the beauty of a man, as Ben Melech; yea, a man that is not able to do a kindness to another, yet has a desire to do it, his good will is his kindness, and the will is taken for the deed.

Gersom takes the word in the sense of “reproach”, as it is sometimes used; and understands it of the sinful desires of the heart, the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart, which are evil continually, and so matter of reproach;

and a poor man [is] better than a liar; who is a rich man, as the Septuagint and Syriac versions add; who denies that he has ability to relieve the poor, when he has; or promises to do it, and does it not; such men of high degree are a lie indeed! and the poor man, whom he should relieve, is a better man than he; or that would relieve another, but it is not in his power to do it.

Ver. 23. *The fear of the Lord [tendeth] to life*, etc.] “Godliness”, of which the fear of the Lord is a principal part, has “the promise of this life and that to come”, (^{<508>}1 Timothy 4:8): the fear of God is the beginning of a spiritual life; and it leads to eternal life, as Gersom observes, and is connected with it;

and [he that hath it] shall abide satisfied; with his lot and portion in this life; with the good things of it he has, being content therewith and “godliness with contentment is great gain”, (^{<506>}1 Timothy 6:6): such a man has enough; he has all things in a spiritual sense; he is full of the blessings of goodness; he is blessed with all spiritual blessings; his mouth is satisfied, and his mind is filled with good things; and so he rests and abides night after night, and day after day;

he shall not be visited with evil; nothing shall hurt him; all his afflictions, his worst things, his evil ones: work together for his good; and they shall never separate from the love of God, nor anything that befalls him in this life, (^{<503>}Romans 8:28,38,39); (see ^{<510>}Psalms 91:10).

Ver. 24. *A slothful [man] hideth his hand in [his] bosom*, etc.] In cold weather to keep it warm, and at other times, as unwilling to use it in labour; it is the proper posture and just attitude of a slothful man. The word for “bosom” is sometimes used for a “pot” or “platter”^{f550}; and then the sense is, that he puts his hands under a pot over a fire to warm them; or in one removed at some distance from the fire, as Jarchi; or rather it may signify his putting his hand into a plate of food, and yet so slothful, as it follows,

and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again; so sluggish, that he will rather starve than be at the pains to feed himself; he will not take his hand out of his bosom, to take food out of the dish to feed himself with;

and even when his hand is in the dish, he will not take it from thence again, and lift it to his mouth; an hyperbolical expression. Gussetius^{f551} thinks, it may have respect to such slothful men, who are careless and negligent to their souls; who, though they have the holy Scriptures in their hands, like a vessel full of wholesome food for the soul, yet will not make use of the least mite out of them, that they may receive eternal life.

Ver. 25. *Smite a scorner, and the simple will beware*, etc.] That is, give reproof to a man that scoffs at religion, and makes a jest of all that is good; for though it may be of no use to him who will despise it, yet it may be observed, and be useful to another that hears it; who, though void of understanding, yet not hardened in impiety as the other, but open to conviction, “will become cunning”,^{f552}, as it may be rendered; or learns wisdom, and becomes hereby a knowing and understanding man; he hears another reprov'd, and fears, and becomes a wise man; so that though reproof may be lost on one, it succeeds in another, which is an encouragement to give it;

and reprove one that hath understanding, [and] he will understand knowledge; he will grow wiser and wiser; he will improve in the knowledge of things; (see ²⁰⁰⁸Proverbs 9:8).

Ver. 26. *He that wasteth [his] father*, etc.] His father's substance, which he gave him first as his portion, and afterwards by paying his debts, and getting him out of prison and out of broils, and that wastes his spirits and his health, and brings his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave;

[and] chaseth away [his] mother: alienates her affections from him, who once had too great a fondness for him; causes her to quit her house, not being able to bear the sight of him and of his actions:

[is] a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach; causes shame to his parents, as well as to himself; and a reproach upon them, as well as on his own character. It may be read thus,

“a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach, wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother^{f553}.”

Ver. 27. *Cease, my son, to hear the instruction*, etc.] The counsel of bad men, or the doctrine of false teachers. The words are spoken either by Solomon to his son; or by Wisdom, that is, Christ, to everyone of his children, to beware of false prophets, and take heed what they hear; (see

~~1075~~ Matthew 7:15 ~~11024~~ Mark 4:24); such as the doctrines of the church of Rome; concerning the Scriptures, forbidding the people to read them; setting unwritten traditions upon a level with them, and making the pope an infallible interpreter of them; concerning merit, works of supererogation, indulgences, pardons, penance, purgatory, etc. such as the instruction of the Arians, Sabellians, Socinians, Pelagians, and Arminians, concerning the Trinity, the deity of Christ, his satisfaction, imputed righteousness, the power and purity of human nature, and man's free will;

[that causeth] to err from the words of knowledge; the words of the living God, the Scriptures of truth; which communicate knowledge, and are profitable for instruction in righteousness; are the means of the true knowledge of God; that there is one, and that he is possessed of all perfections: particularly that he is gracious and merciful, and pardons all manner of sin; that he is in Christ, the God of all grace; that he is the God and Father of Christ, and the covenant God and Father of all his people in him; they give knowledge of his mind and will concerning the salvation of men, and of his ways and worship. The wholesome words of our Lord Jesus, the salutary doctrines of the Gospel, may be here meant; those words of grace, wisdom, and knowledge, which come from him, and give knowledge of his person, offices, relations, incarnation, and blessings of grace by him; from whence they are called the word of peace and reconciliation, the word of righteousness, the word of life, and the word of salvation. Now these are all words of knowledge; and are the means of a spiritual, experimental, and fiducial knowledge of Christ, which is preferable to all other knowledge, and even to everything in the world; and therefore care should be taken, and everything avoided that tends to cause to err from these words and doctrines, which convey, promote, and improve this knowledge. Jarchi and Aben Ezra transpose the words, thus;

“cease, my son, to err from the words of knowledge, to or that thou mayest hear instruction and the latter makes mention of such an interpretation, cease, my son, from the words of knowledge, if thou wouldest hear instruction, and after that err:”

that is, better never hear and know at all, than to turn from those doctrines and instructions; (see ~~6022~~ 2 Peter 2:20,21).

Ver. 28. *An ungodly witness scorneth judgment*, etc.] Or, “a witness of Belial”^{f554}. A false witness is not awed by the place of judgment where he is; nor by the judge before whom he is; nor by the law, the rule of

judgment, nor by the punishment of perjury; he scorns all these, and scoffs at them, and proceeds in bearing a false testimony: or he covers that which is right and just, and eludes judgment by specious and sophistic arguments and pretences. Or this may be understood of a false teacher, that scorns the rule of judgment, or colours over things, to make them plausible, and seem to be agreeable to it;

and the mouth of the wicked devoureth iniquity; greedily, and with pleasure commits it; as a hungry man takes in his food; or a thirsty man drinks down water: and in like manner are false doctrines imbibed by men of perverse minds.

Ver. 29. *Judgments are prepared for scorners*, etc.] Either by the civil magistrate, or by the Lord, and indeed by both; and if they miss the one, they will certainly meet the other; though they mock at present punishment and a future judgment, yet everlasting fire is prepared for them, (~~4254~~ Matthew 25:41);

and stripes for the back of fools; as scorners are; which shall be inflicted on them sooner or later; if they are not stricken with the stripes of men, they shall endure the strokes of divine justice and vengeance hereafter.

CHAPTER 20

Ver. 1. *Wine [is] a mocker, strong drink [is] raging*, etc.] Wine deceives a man; it not only overcomes him before he is aware, but it promises him a pleasure which it does not give; but, on the contrary, excessive drinking gives him pain, and so mocks him; yea, it exposes him to reproach and disgrace, and to the mockery and derision of others; as well as it sets him to scoff at his companions, and even to mock at religion, and all that is good and serious; (see ^{<3075>}Hosea 7:5); and strong drink not only disturbs the brain, and puts the spirits in a ferment, so that a man rages within, but it sets him a raving and quarrelling with his company, and everybody he meets with; such generally get into broils and contentions, and get woe, sorrow, and wounds, (^{<4133>}Proverbs 23:29,30). Aben Ezra gives this as the sense of the words,

“a man of wine”

(that is, one that is given to wine, a wine bibber), so Ben Melech,

“is a mocker, and he cries out for strong drink, that it may be given him;”

which is not a bad sense of the words.

and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise; whosoever gives himself to it, is not on his guard against it, but is overcome by it, does not act a wise but an unwise part: wine besots as well as deceives men. This may be applied to the wine of fornication, or to the false doctrine and superstition of the church of Rome; with which the nations of the earth are deceived and made drunk, and which puts them upon blaspheming God, deriding his people, and using cruelty to them, (^{<6172>}Revelation 17:2,3,6 18:3,23).

Ver. 2. *The fear of a king [is] as the roaring of a lion*, etc.] The wrath and displeasure of a king, which causes fear; (see ^{<2092>}Proverbs 19:12); kings should be terrors to evil works and workers, though not to good ones, (^{<6133>}Romans 13:3). This is true of the King of kings, who one day will be terrible to the drunkards, the mockers, and murderers of his people, before spoken of;

[whoso] provoketh him to anger sinneth [against] his own soul; he exposes his life to danger: the Targum supplies it as we do. It may be rendered, his “soul sinneth”^{f555}; he is guilty of sin, as well as is in danger of punishment; (see ^{<1085>}Proverbs 8:36).

Ver. 3. *[It is] an honour for a man to cease from strife*, etc.] As Abraham did, (^{<0137>}Genesis 13:7,8); when engaged in a quarrel with his neighbour, or in a lawsuit, or in a religious controversy, especially when he finds he is in the wrong; and indeed, if he is in the right, when he perceives it is like to issue in no good, and is only about words to no profit, it is an honour to drop it;

but every fool will be meddling; with things he has no concern in, or is not equal to; yet will carry on the debate, though it is to his disgrace; (see ^{<1074>}Proverbs 17:14).

Ver. 4. *The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold*, etc.] Or, “in the cold”; in the time of cold, as Aben Ezra; in the time of autumn, which is the time of ploughing, when it begins to be cold weather, and winter is drawing on: and this is discouraging to the sluggard, who does not care to take his hands out of his bosom to feed himself, and much less to plough; (see ^{<1092>}Proverbs 19:24);

[therefore] shall he beg in harvest, and [have] nothing; he shall ask of those who have ploughed and sowed, and are now reaping and gathering in their increase at harvest time; but they shall give him nothing; for such as will not work should not eat; and if a man will not plough and sow, he cannot expect to reap, nor should he be encouraged in begging. This holds good in spiritual things; such who have been slothful and sluggish about their spiritual affairs, unconcerned for the grace of God, and indolent in the use of means, or performance of duty, will ask when too late, or of wrong persons, and shall not have it; as the foolish virgins ask oil of the wise, when the bridegroom is come; and the rich man for water from Abraham, when in hell, (^{<1138>}Matthew 25:8 ^{<1163>}Luke 16:24).

Ver. 5. *Counsel in the heart of man [is like] deep water*, etc.] Pure and undisturbed, but secret, hidden, and hard to be come at: such are the things of the spirit of a man, the thoughts of his mind, the devices of his heart; which, though easily known by the searcher of hearts, are not easily penetrated into by men; or it is not easily got out of them what is in them, especially in some men, who are very close and reserved. This is true of

wicked men, who seek sleep to hide their counsel; and of good men, especially studious men, who have got a great deal of wisdom and knowledge in them, but not very communicative, being slow of speech, and silent in conversation;

but a man of understanding will draw it out; he will find ways and means to discover the secret designs of wicked men, whether against church or state; and, by asking proper questions, an understanding man will get out useful things from men of knowledge, the most reserved: some men must be pumped, and a good deal of pains must be taken with them, to get out anything of them, as in getting water out of a deep well, and which when got is very good; and so is that wisdom and knowledge which is gotten by an inquisitive man from another of superior knowledge, but not very diffusive of it.

Ver. 6. *Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness*, etc.] As the Pharisee did, in (^{<4281>}Luke 18:11,12); and as the Pharisees in common did; who did all their works to be seen of men, and made clean the outside of the cup and platter; and were very careful to appear outwardly righteous to men, (^{<4285>}Matthew 23:5,25,28). And indeed this is the general cast of men; everyone is proclaiming his goodness to others, and would be thought to be good men; and cannot be easy with doing a good action, unless it is known, and particularly acts of beneficence and alms deeds; and are like the Pharisees, who, on such occasions, sounded a trumpet before them, (^{<4182>}Matthew 6:2). And the word may be rendered, “his mercy”^{f556}, or his kindness to the poor: the Targum renders it,

“many of the children of men are called merciful men;”

and so the Vulgate Latin version; and they like to be so called and accounted, whether they are so or not;

but a faithful man who can find? who answers to the character he gives of himself, or others upon his own representation give him; who is as good as his word, and, having promised assistance and relief, gives it; and who, having boasted that he has done a kindness to such an one and such an one, does the same likewise to another when applied to; or who sticks to his friend, and does not forsake him in his adversity, but supports and supplies him whom he knew in prosperity; it is hard and rare to find such a man; (see ^{<4211>}Psalms 12:1). Or, though every man is talking of his good works,

and boasting of his goodness, it is difficult to find an Israelite indeed, in whom the true grace of God is.

Ver. 7. *The just [man] walketh in his integrity*, etc.] This is the faithful and upright man, who is made righteous by the obedience of Christ; and walks by faith in him, and according to the truth of the Gospel;

his children [are] blessed after him; with temporal blessings; and, walking in the same integrity as he does, they are blessed with spiritual blessings here, and eternal blessedness hereafter; see (~~1876~~ Psalm 37:26). It is an observation of an Heathen poet¹⁵⁵⁷, that good things befall the children of the godly, but not the children of the ungodly.

Ver. 8. *A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment*, etc.] That executes judgment himself, as David and Solomon did; who ascends the throne, and sits personally there, and hears and tries causes himself, and not by his servants:

scattereth away all evil with his eyes; all evil men, as the Targum; everyone that is evil, as Aben Ezra: he will easily and quickly discern who is evil, or who is in a bad cause before him, and will pass sentence on him, and drive him away from him with shame and disgrace, and to receive deserved punishment; or he will terrify persons from coming before him with false witness against their neighbour, or with a wrong cause. This may be applied to Christ, the King of kings, and Judge of all; whose eyes are as a flame of fire; who will clearly see into all hearts and actions, when he shall sit on his throne of judgment; and shall pass the righteous and definitive sentence, and shall drive the wicked into hell, into everlasting punishment.

Ver. 9. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean*, etc.] The heart of man is naturally unclean, the mind, conscience, understanding, will, and affections; there is no part clean, all are defiled with sin; and though there is such a thing as a pure or clean heart, yet not as made so by men; it is God that has made the heart, that can only make it clean, or create a clean heart in men; it is not to be done by themselves, or by anything that they can do; it is done only by the grace of God, and blood of Christ: God has promised to do it, and he does it; and to him, and to him only, is it to be ascribed;

I am pure from my sin? the sin of nature or of action: such indeed who are washed from their sins in the blood of Christ; whose sins are all pardoned for his sake, and who are justified from all things by his righteousness; they

are pure from sin, none is to be seen in them, or found upon them in a legal sense: they are all fair and comely, and without fault in the sight of God; their iniquities are caused to pass from them; and they are clothed with fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints: but then none are pure from indwelling sin, nor from the commission of sin; no man can say this, any more than the former; if he does, he is an ignorant man, and does not know the plague of his heart; and he is a vain pharisaical man; yea, a man that does not speak the truth, nor is the truth in him, (~~6108~~1 John 1:8).

Ver. 10. *Divers weights, [and] divers measures*, etc.] Or, “a stone and a stone, and an ephah and an ephah”^{f558}. Stones being in old time used in weighing, and an “ephah” was a common measure among the Jews; and these ought not to be different; one stone or weight for buying, and another for selling; and one measure to buy goods in with, and another to sell out with; the one too heavy, the other too light; the one too large, and the other too scanty; whereby justice is not done between man and man; whereas they ought to be just and equal, (~~6105~~Leviticus 19:35,36);

both of them [are] alike abomination to the Lord; who loves righteousness and hates iniquity, and requires of men to do justly; and abhors every act of injustice, and whatever is detrimental to men’s properties; (see ~~6110~~Proverbs 11:1 16:11).

Ver. 11. *Even a child is known by his doings*, etc.] As well as a man; “ye shall know them by their fruits”, (~~4176~~Matthew 7:16); professors and profane. So a child soon discovers its genius by its actions; it soon shows its inclination and disposition; and some shrewd guesses may be made how it will turn out, a wise man or a fool, a virtuous or a vicious man; though this does not always hold good, yet something may be observed, which may be a direction to parents in the education of their children, and placing them out to what is proper and suitable for them. Some observe, that the word has a quite contrary meaning, that “a child carries himself a stranger by his doings”^{f559}; so that he is not known by them: he so conceals and disguises himself, he acts so fraudulently and deceitfully, and plays the hypocrite, and puts the cheat on men, that they cannot tell what he is, nor what he will be; and if children can thus dissemble, as not to be known by their actions, then much more grown persons;

whether his work [be] pure, and whether [it be] right; not what his present work is, or actions are, but what his later life and conversation will be; which in some measure may be judged of, though not with certainty and

exactness; (see ^{<0216>}Proverbs 22:6); especially when he acts a covert and deceitful part.

Ver. 12. *The hearing ear, and the seeing eye*, etc.] There may be an ear that hears not, and an eye that seeth not, and which men may make; the painter can paint an ear and an eye, and a carver can carve both; but they are ears that hear not, and eyes that see not, (^{<0185>}Psalm 115:5,6); but such as can hear and see are of the Lord's own make;

the Lord hath made even both of them; they are the effects of his wisdom, power, and goodness; (see ^{<0041>}Exodus 4:11 ^{<0947>}Psalm 94:7,8); they are both senses of excellent use and service; great mercies and blessings of life, for which men should be abundantly thankful, and pray for the continuance of, and make use of to the best purposes; they are means of conveying much knowledge to the mind, and by which it may be cultivated and improved in it. The words may be considered in a figurative as well as a literal sense. Some by "the seeing eye" understand the civil magistrate, who is that to the body politic as the eyes are to the natural body, eminent in it, overlook it, watch and provide for its good, and against its hurt; (see ^{<0061>}Numbers 10:31 ^{<0294>}Job 29:14-16); and by "the hearing ear" the obedient subject, that hearkens to the laws and directions of his governors, and cheerfully obeys them, and both these are of the Lord's making; civil magistracy is his ordinance, and civil magistrates are ordained by him; and from him they have their qualifications fitting them for their office; and it is owing to the overruling providence of God on the hearts of men that they are inclined to yield subjection to them. Others think that by the "seeing eye" are meant the ministers of the word, who are set in the highest place in the church; whose business it is to inspect, take the oversight of, and watch the souls of men; to pry and search into the truths of the Gospel, and show them to others: and by the "hearing ear" the hearers of the word, that receive it readily in the love of it, and heartily obey it. I am rather of opinion that one and the same sort of persons are intended; converted ones, who have the "hearing ear", who try what they hear by the word of God; understand what they hear, know it experimentally; can distinguish truth from error, approve and love the Gospel, receive it with all gladness and readiness, with eagerness and pleasure; keep it when they have it, and practise what they hear, and bring forth fruit to the glory of God: this they have not of themselves, being naturally averse to and dull of hearing, and even stop their ears to the truth; but it comes by the word, and is the Lord's work, and owing to his mighty power, who opens their ears, gives

them new ears, which they have in regeneration; when they hear spiritually, profitably, pleasantly, comfortably, and to their great astonishment: these also have the “seeing eye”, a sight of themselves, their sinful and lost estate; of the plague of their own hearts, their want of righteousness, and impotence to do anything that is good; a sight of Christ, of the loveliness of his person, of the fulness of his grace, of their need of him, and of his suitability as a Saviour and Redeemer; and this is not of themselves, who are dark and darkness itself, but they are made light in the Lord; he opens their eyes by his spirit and by means of his word, which is a work of almighty power.

Ver. 13. *Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty*, etc.] Sleep is a very great natural blessing; it is a gift of God, what nature requires, and is desirable; it is to be loved, though not immoderately; it is sweet to a man, and what he should be thankful for; yet should not indulge himself in to the neglect of the proper business of life; nor to be used but at the proper time for it; for the eye is made for sight, and not for sleep only, as Aben Ezra observes, connecting the words with the preceding; and therefore should not be kept shut and inattentive to business, which must necessarily end in poverty and want; (see ^{<116>}Proverbs 6:9-11); and so spiritual sleep and slothfulness bring on a spiritual poverty in the souls of men, both as to the exercise of grace and the performance of duty;

open thine eyes, [and] thou shalt be satisfied with bread; that is, open thine eyes from sleep, awake and keep so, and be sedulous and industrious in the business of thy calling; so shalt thou have a sufficiency of food for thyself and family; (see ^{<121>}Proverbs 12:11). It may be applied to awaking out of sleep in a spiritual sense, and to a diligent attendance to duty and the use of means, whereby the souls of men come to be satisfied with the goodness of the Lord, and the fatness of his house; (see ^{<154>}Ephesians 5:14 ^{<161>}Psalms 65:4).

Ver. 14. *[It is] naught, [it is] naught, saith the buyer*, etc.] When he comes to the shop of the seller, or to market to buy goods, he undervalues them, says they are not so good as they should be, nor so cheap as he can buy them at;

but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth; after he has brought the seller to as low a price as he can, and has bought the goods, and gone away with them, and got home among his friends; then he boasts what a bargain he has bought, how good the commodity is, how he has been too many for

the seller, and has outwitted him; and so glories in his frauds and tricks, and rejoices in his boasting, and all such rejoicing is evil, (^{<3046>}James 4:16). Jarchi applies this to a man that is a hard student in the law, and through much difficulty gets the knowledge of it, when he is ready to pronounce himself unhappy; but when he is got full fraught with wisdom, then he rejoices at it, and glories in it.

Ver. 15. *There is gold, and a multitude of rubies*, etc.] A man may have a large quantity of either, or of both of thorn, as some men have; for there is much of them in the world, not only in mines and quarries, but in the houses and cabinets of men;

but the lips of knowledge [are] a precious jewel; knowledge even of things natural, and a gift of elocution to express it by, are a rare jewel, and much more precious than gold and rubies, than a multitude of them; these are not to be mentioned with it, it is not equalled by them, it is greatly superior to them; (see ^{<3032>}Job 28:12-19); and much more spiritual knowledge, and a capacity of expressing that to the edification of others; and especially Christ, the Wisdom of God, and the knowledge of him, who is more precious than rubies, and all desirable things, in comparison of which all things are loss and dung, (^{<3084>}Proverbs 3:14,15 ^{<3088>}Philippians 3:8).

Ver. 16. *Take his garment that is surety [for] a stranger*, etc.] Which a man is cautioned against, (^{<3081>}Proverbs 6:1); but if a man will be so weak and foolish, others ought to take care of him, and be cautious how they trust him; for he is in danger of being ruined by his suretyship, and therefore nothing should be lent him without a pledge, without a proper security; for though it was not lawful to take the garment of a poor man for a pledge, at least it was not to be kept after sunset, (^{<3026>}Exodus 22:26); yet it was right to take such a man's garment who had or would be thought to have such an abundance as to be surety for a stranger. Some think these words are to be taken as a prophecy of what would be the case of such a man that is a surety for a stranger; in the issue he will be stripped of all he has, and have not a coat to put on. It has been applied to our Lord Jesus Christ, who became a surety for such who were foreigners and strangers, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; and who had the garment of his human nature taken from him and which was a pledge and ransom for the sins of his people;

and take a pledge of him for a strange woman; a harlot; such as have to do with lewd women are not to be trusted; for they are in a fair way for ruin,

and therefore should not be intrusted with anything without a pledge; all in connection with such creatures lose their credit; it is dangerous having any concern with them in trade for they are liable to be brought to a piece of bread; and therefore persons should be cautious how they trade with them, and should observe to secure themselves.

Ver. 17. *Bread of deceit [is] sweet to a man*, etc.] Which may be understood of sin in general, which is bread to the sinner, he eats it: it is called “the bread of wickedness”, (^{<2047>}Proverbs 4:17); but it is but poor bread, no other than ashes (^{<2340>}Isaiah 44:20); it is “bread of deceit”; there is a deceitfulness in all sin; it is in appearance fair and pleasant to the eye, like the fruit our first parents ate of; or like the apples of Sodom, of which it is reported that they are very beautiful to look at, but when touched drop into ashes; sin promises pleasure, profit, honour, liberty, peace, and impunity, yet gives neither; but the reverse, pain, loss, shame, servitude distress, and destruction; and yet it is sweet to an unregenerate man, one of a vicious taste, or whose taste remains unchanged; it is natural to him and he takes as much delight in it as in eating and drinking; and especially such sins as are called constitution ones, which he is not easily prevailed upon to part with; wickedness is sweet in his mouth, he rolls it and keeps it as a sweet morsel under his tongue, and forsakes it not, (^{<1812>}Job 20:12-14). It may be applied to particular sins, as to adultery, as it is by Jarchi, and with which may be compared (^{<2047>}Proverbs 9:17); and to riches unlawfully gotten; (see ^{<1815>}Job 20:15,16); and to the cruel usage and persecution of the people of God, called the bread of wickedness and wine of violence, which wicked men take as much delight in as in eating and drinking, (^{<2047>}Proverbs 4:17 ^{<0144>}Psalms 14:4); particularly the cruelty of the church of Rome, who has made herself drunk with the blood of the saints, in which she delights, and will be bitter to her in the end, (^{<6176>}Revelation 17:6 16:6 18:7,8). It may be interpreted of false doctrine; so the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees is signified by leavened bread, (^{<0105>}Matthew 16:6,12); this is not true bread, does not strengthen, nourish, and refresh, as the Gospel does, but eats as a canker; it is not solid and substantial, but mere chaff, it is bread of falsehood and lying; false teachers lie in wait to deceive, their doctrines are lies in hypocrisy, and, yet these are sweet unto, and taken down greedily by carnal persons; particularly the doctrine of justification by works: this is the bread some men live on, but it is only husks which swine eat; it is feeding on wind, and filling the belly with east wind, which swells and vainly puffs up the fleshly mind; it is contrary to the, Gospel, and is not

of the truth, and will deceive persons that trust to it; and yet it is sweet to a natural man; his own righteousness, and to trust to it, is natural to him; it is his own, and what he has laboured for, and is fond of; it affords room for boasting, and he does not care to part with it;

but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel; with that which will be ungrateful, uncomfortable, and distressing to him; the conscience of a sinner, who has been taking his fill of sin and pleasure in it shall be filled with remorse and distress; and with bitter reflections upon himself; with a dreadful sense of divine wrath, and fearful apprehensions of it now; and destruction and damnation will be his portion hereafter; and this will be the consequence of all false doctrine, and of a man's trusting to his own righteousness and despising Christ's; (see ^{<6011>}2 Peter 2:1 ^{<1212>}Matthew 22:12,13).

Ver. 18. [*Every purpose is established by counsel*, etc.] Or “the thought”^{f560} of a man, everyone of them, what he has thought to do, formed a scheme of in his mind, and resolved upon, by taking advice of his friends, and especially by asking counsel of God, who gives, wisdom liberally, and upbraids not; he is confirmed in his good designs; and he cheerfully pursues them, and they are ordered and directed to the glory of God, his own good and the good of others; for this can only be understood of wise and good thoughts and purposes;

and with good advice make war; this should not be entered upon rashly, without first considering whether there is a just and lawful cause of it; and without consulting the necessary charge and expense of it; whether there is a sufficiency of men and money to carry it on; and what may probably be the issue of it. It is right in a king to advise with his privy council, or with the chief council of the nation; but, above all, both he and his people should seek advice of the Lord on such an occasion; (see ^{<1431>}Luke 14:31,32). This may be applied to our spiritual warfare with sin, Satan, and the world; not that it should be any doubt with whether we should engage in such a war; but we should advise with experienced soldiers, and especially with God and his word, what weapons to take, and how to use them; and consider in whose name and strength we are to fight; and inquire and learn the force, methods, and designs of the enemy, and where to guard against them or attack them. Jarchi interprets it of making war with Satan by repentance, prayer, and fasting.

Ver. 19. *He that goeth about [as] a talebearer revealeth secrets*, etc.] Or, “he that revealeth secrets goeth about as a talebearer”; a man that has really got the secrets of others out of them respecting themselves and families, and the affairs of them, or however pretends he master of them; goes about telling his tales from house to house, to the great prejudice of those whose secrets he is entrusted with, or pretends to be; and to the great prejudice of those to whom he tells them, as well as to his own; this is contrary to the law of Moses, and the rules of Christianity, (^{<B1916>}Leviticus 19:16 ^{<A1813>}1 Timothy 5:13);

therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips; or “mingle not with him”^{f561}; do not associate with him, do not keep him company, have nothing to say to him or do with him; for when he flatters you, and highly praises and extols you, he has a design upon you to get what he can out of you, in order to expose you elsewhere; therefore suspect him, be upon your guard, shun him and avoid him. It may be applied to false teachers, and their deceptions with good words and fair speeches; the word used signifies to deceive with the lips; (see ^{<A1618>}Romans 16:18); and well agrees with the parasites of Rome, (^{<A1823>}Revelation 18:23).

Ver. 20. *Whoso curseth his father or his mother*, etc.] This is dreadful indeed! a person must be got to a great pitch of wickedness to do this; to curse his parents, one or other of them, that have been the instruments of his being, and by whom he has been brought up and put out into the world; to slight them, despise them, and mock at them, is highly base and criminal, but to curse them is shocking! what can such expect but the curse of God upon them?

his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness; he shall be deprived of his natural sight; (see ^{<A1017>}Proverbs 30:17); or the very light of nature shall be extinct in him; and indeed such an one acts as if not guided by it, nor under its influence; or whatsoever favour from the Lord he has enjoyed, it shall be taken from him; his lamp or candle of outward felicity shall be quenched, and burn no longer; (see ^{<B1815>}Job 18:5 22:17); or his soul, the candle of the Lord, in him, (^{<A1017>}Proverbs 20:27); shall be removed; or he “shall die”, not only a corporeal but an eternal death; see (^{<A1217>}Exodus 21:17); “blackness of darkness”^{f562} as the words may be rendered, are reserved for him in the world to come, and which will be his portion, (^{<A1113>}Jude 1:13).

Ver. 21. *An inheritance [may be] gotten hastily at the beginning*, etc.] Of a man's setting out in the world in trade and business; and which sometimes is got lawfully, and this must be excepted from this proverb; but generally what is got hastily and in a short time is got unlawfully, and so does not prosper. Some Jewish interpreters, as Gersom, understand it of an inheritance which comes to persons from their friends, without any labour or industry of theirs; and which they are not careful to keep, but, as it lightly comes, it lightly goes: here is a various reading; our version follows the marginal reading, and which is followed by the Targum, Jarchi, and Gersom, and by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions; but the written text is, "an inheritance loathsome" or "abominable"; an ill gotten one, so the word is used in (³¹⁰⁸Zechariah 11:8). Schultens, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, which signifies to be covetous, renders it "covetously got" or "possessed"¹⁵⁶³; and so the Arabic version is, "an inheritance greedily desired", obtained through covetousness and illicit practices; but in his late commentary on this book he renders the passage, by the help of Arabism, "an inheritance smitten with the curse of sordidness", as being sordidly got and enjoyed;

but the end thereof shall not be blessed; it will not continue, it will be taken away from them, and put into some other hands. Jarchi illustrates it by the tribes of Gad and Reuben making haste to take their part on the other side Jordan before their brethren, and were the first that were carried captive.

Ver. 22. *Say not thou, I will recompense evil*, etc.] With evil; do an injury to one that has done one to you; private revenge is not to be taken, but should be left to God, to whom vengeance belongs, (¹⁵²⁵Deuteronomy 32:35,41);

[but] wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee; commit thyself and cause to God; leave it with him to avenge thy wrongs; wait upon him in the way of thy duty, and wait his own time to do thee justice; he will at the proper season, and in his own way, save thee from thine enemy, and make a righteous retribution to him.

Ver. 23. *Divers weights [are] an abomination unto the Lord*, etc.] (See Gill on "³¹¹⁰Proverbs 20:10"); which is here repeated for the further confirmation of it, and that it might be taken notice of and avoided; and perhaps this sin of using false weights and measures was common with the Jews;

and a false balance [is] not good; in the sight of God; but an abomination, as in (²⁰⁰⁰Proverbs 11:1); nor is it good for men in the issue; for though they may gain by it at present, it will prove a loss to them in the end, since it will bring a curse on all they get.

Ver. 24. *Man's goings [are] of the Lord*, etc.] In a natural and literal sense, the instruments of going are of the Lord; the act of motion from place to place is not without the concurrence of his providence; as in him we live, and move, and have our being, so “in and by him we move”; he preserves our going out and coming in; and as the preservation, so the success and prosperity of journeying are owing to his providence, and the whole is under his care and direction: and so likewise, in a civil sense, all the civil concerns, business, and actions of life, are guided by his providence; there is a time for every purpose under heaven, and the success of all depends on a divine blessing; and things are with every man in civil life according to the providence of God, and as it is his pleasure they should be; and it is by him they are directed to take this and the other step, the issue of which is according to his will: and this may be applied to men's goings in a spiritual and religious sense; faith, which is properly a man's going to Christ as a perishing sinner for pardon and cleansing, for righteousness and life, for food and rest, and eternal salvation, is not of a man's self, it is of God; it is his gift, and of his operation; no man can go to Christ in this way unless it be given him of God, or he is drawn by his grace, (¹⁸⁰⁰John 6:35,57,44,65); and all spiritual actions which flow from hence are by the grace of God, and under his influence and direction; as walking in the path of truth, it is the Lord that teaches it, causes to choose it, leads into it, and preserves there; walking in the statutes and ordinances of the Lord, and in the ways of righteousness and holiness, is of him, and owing to his Spirit puts within his people; and indeed all good works done by them, which may be called their goings, he has foreordained that they should walk in them; it is by the grace of God, and in the strength of Christ, and with the assistance of the blessed Spirit, they walk on in them; and their perseverance in faith and holiness, or their going from strength to strength, is all of the Lord;

how can a man then understand his own way? even of a journey in a literal sense, what will be the issue and event of it, when or whether ever he shall return to his own house again, since all is under the direction and providence of God; and also of his civil affairs, he knows his beginning, and how he goes on for the present; but what will be the end he knows not;

and a natural and unregenerate man knows not what way he is in, where he is going, and what his last end will be; being in darkness, in which he was born, brought up, and continues, he does not rightly understand what is his duty, what he should do, what is the good and perfect will of God, what the way is in which he should go, and which is for his good; nor the way everlasting, which leads to eternal life, few find this way. Or it may be understood of the way of the Lord, “how can a man then understand his way?” the Lord’s way, not man’s; the way of the Lord in providence, which is as the deep, and unsearchable; and the way of life and salvation by Christ, which is of the Lord’s devising and resolving on; this way of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, is not known by the natural man; and when it is externally revealed in the word, and by the outward ministry of it, it is not understood so as to be approved of, but is despised, unless God gives a heart to know it, or a spiritual and experimental understanding of it.

Ver. 25. [*It is a snare to the man [who] devoureth [that which is] holy,* etc.] Which is separated to sacred uses, is devoted to the Lord, as firstfruits, tithes, offerings, etc. which if a man converts to his own use is sacrilege, and this is a sin and a snare, and brings ruin on him; (see ^{<308>}Malachi 3:8,9);

and after vows to make inquiry: that is a sin and a snare also; a man should first inquire before he vows, whether it is right for him to make a vow, and whether he is able to keep it; it is too late after the vow is made to inquire about the lawfulness or expedience of it, and how to find out ways and means to dissolve it and be clear of it; for it is better not to vow, than to vow and not pay, (^{<204>}Ecclesiastes 5:4,5); when a thing is in a man’s own hands, he may do what he will; but when he has devoted it to another use, it is no longer in his power; as the case of Ananias and Sapphira shows, (^{<401>}Acts 5:1-4).

Ver. 26. *A wise king scattereth the wicked,* etc.] Or “fans [them] away”^{f564}; separates them from his good counsellors, courtiers, and subjects; scatters them from his presence and court, and breaks their counsels and confederacies one with another; he discovers, discountenances, and discourages them; (see Gill on “^{<208>}Proverbs 20:8”);

and bringeth the wheel over them; alluding to the custom of the eastern nations turning a cart wheel over the grain in threshing it out, and agreeably to the metaphor in the preceding clause; (see ^{<337>}Isaiah

28:27,28). Though some think it refers to a sort of punishment inflicted on malefactors in those times and countries, by putting them under harrows drawn on wheels, as breaking upon the wheel has been since used; see (~~1023~~ 2 Samuel 12:31). The Arabic version understands it of exile. Jarchi interprets the wise king of the Lord, and the wicked of Pharaoh and his host, on whom he brought the wheel, or gave measure for measure, and punished in a way of retaliation; and to this sense it is by some^{f565} interpreted,

“as the wheel turns over, just in the same place, so as the wicked hath done, it shall be done to them.”

It may be applied to Christ, the wise King, who scatters all his and our enemies; whose fan is in his hand, and he wilt thoroughly purge his floor, (~~4182~~ Matthew 3:12).

Ver. 27. *The spirit of man [is] the candle of the Lord*, etc.] The rational soul of man is a light set up in him; this is what is commonly called the light of nature; it was a bright and burning light at first, but through sin is become a very feeble one; by which men have only a glimmering view of divine things, of God and his worship, and of what he would have done, or not done; by this light men do but grope after him, if happily they may find him and know his will; it is but like a candle light at best, in comparison of divine revelation, or the Gospel of the grace of God, which has shone out like the sun in its meridian glory; and especially in comparison of the sun of righteousness, Christ Jesus, and the light of the divine Spirit; yet this is a light set up by the Lord, a candle of his; it comes from the Father of lights, he is the author and maintainer of it; it is a spirit and understanding which is by the inspiration of the Almighty; (see ~~4007~~ Genesis 2:7 ~~8308~~ Job 32:8 ~~8101~~ Zechariah 12:1);

searching all the inward parts of the belly; or heart; the thoughts, intents, and purposes of it; which are the things of a man that only the spirit of man knows; by this candle, or light, he can look into his own heart, the inmost recesses of it, and reflect upon his thoughts and schemes, and judge in some measure whether right or wrong; there is a conscience in man, which, unless seared, passes sentence on what is in man, or done by him, and either excuses or accuses; (see ~~4120~~ 1 Corinthians 2:10,11) (~~4114~~ Romans 2:14,15).

Ver. 28. *Mercy and truth preserve the king*, etc.] Which are two good qualifications in a prince; not ruling his subjects with rigour and cruelty, but with tenderness and clemency; easing them as much as he can of burdens and pressures; showing compassion to the distressed, and pardoning delinquents when the case will admit of it; as also being faithful to his word, promises, and engagements; inviolably adhering to the laws and constitution of the nation, and steady in his administrations of justice; these preserve him in the affections of his people, and make him safe and secure on his throne; and because of these the Lord preserves him from his enemies. It maybe rendered, “grace and truth”^{f566}; and applied to Christ, who is full of both, and which are said to preserve him, (^{<3911>}Psalm 40:11);

and his throne is upholden by mercy; this explains what is meant by the preservation of him, and what is the security of his throne and kingdom, which is clemency and goodness to his subjects.

Ver. 29. *The glory of young men [is] their strength*, etc.] That is the excellent thing in them, and it is to their honour when it is employed in the service of their king and country, and especially in the service of God and religion; though it does not become them to glory in it, (^{<3923>}Jeremiah 9:23);

and the beauty of old men [is] the gray head; an index of wisdom and prudence; (see ^{<3812>}Job 12:12). The design of the proverb is to show that both have their excellencies and usefulness, young men and old men, and should not despise one another; nor either of them be despised in a commonwealth, both being useful in it, the one for strength, the other for counsel; and so in the church of Christ; (see ^{<3913>}1 John 2:13,14).

Ver. 30. *The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil*, etc.] Rubs it off and scours it away, as the word^{f567} signifies, or is a clearing and rubbing it off; some men must be beaten black and blue, or must have very sore correction, before they can be reclaimed and reformed from their evil ways; so some interpret it of the evil man^{f568}: sanctified afflictions to God’s people are the means of purging away their iniquities, their dross, and their sin; but there is nothing so effectually cleanses from sin as the blood of Jesus, or heals or cures of it as his blue wounds and stripes; (see ^{<3370>}Isaiah 27:9 53:5);

so [do] stripes the inward part of the belly; or heart and conscience; by means of corrections and chastisement men are brought to an inward sense of sin; they are shown their transgressions wherein they have exceeded, and

are commanded to return from iniquity, (~~3830~~ Job 36:9,10); they lament and mourn over sin, confess it and forsake it; and then may the inwards of the heart, the mind and conscience, defiled with them, be said to be cleansed from them; especially when led by these stripes and corrections to the stripes, wounds, and blood of Christ which, being applied, cleanse from all, sin inwardly and outwardly.

CHAPTER 21

Ver. 1. *The king's heart [is] in the hand of the Lord, [as] the rivers of water,* etc.] The heart of every king, and all that is in it, his thoughts, counsels, purposes, and designs; the hearts of bad kings, as Pharaoh, whom the Lord hardened and softened at pleasure; the antichristian kings, into whose hearts he put it to give their kingdoms to the beast, (⁶¹⁷¹⁷ Revelation 17:17); the hearts of good kings, as David, Solomon, Cyrus, and others: and if the hearts of kings are in the hands of the Lord, which are full of things of the greatest importance with respect to the government of the world; and which are generally more untractable and unmanageable; and who are more resolute and positive, and will have their own wills and ways, especially arbitrary princes; then much more the hearts of other persons. And which are as “rivers of water”; for so the words may be rendered, as rivers of water is “the heart of a king”, which is “in the hand of the Lord”; unstable, fluid, and fluctuating; and yet the Lord can stay and settle, and fix them, and keep them steady and within bounds: or which, like a torrent of water, comes with force and impetus; and so the Septuagint render it, “the force of waters”; and bears all before it, as do the wills of despotic kings; and yet these the Lord can stop and bound, and rule and overrule: or like rivers of water, reviving and refreshing, so is the heart of a good king, full of wisdom and prudence, of integrity and faithfulness, of clemency and goodness; the streams of whose bounty and kindness flow among his subjects, to their great pleasure and profit; so Christ, the King of kings, is said to be as “rivers of water”, (²³⁰² Isaiah 32:2). The allusion is to gardeners, that make channels for the water to run in, to water their gardens; or to husbandmen, that cut aqueducts from rivers, to water their fields; or to the turning of the course of rivers, as Euphrates was by Cyrus, when he took Babylon. The heart of a king is as much at the dispose of the Lord, and can be turned by him as easily as such canals may be made, or the course of a river turned; for it follows:

he turneth it whithersoever he will; contrary to their first designs, and to answer another purpose; oftentimes towards his people, and for the good of his cause and interest, which they never designed; and to bring about such things as were out of their view. And so, in conversion, the Lord can turn the hearts of men as he pleases; their understanding, will, and affections, are in his hands: he can make the understanding light which was

darkness, and so turn it from darkness to light; he can take off the stiffness of the will, and turn it from its bias and bent, and make it willing to that which is good in the day of his power: he can turn the channel and course of the affections from sinful lusts and pleasures, to himself, his son, his truths, word, worship, ordinances, and people; he can take out of the heart what he pleases, its ignorance, hardness, enmity, unbelief, pride, and vanity; and he can put in what he pleases, his fear, his laws, his Spirit, and the gifts and graces of if; he can change and turn it just as he will; he that made the heart can operate upon it, and do with it as seems good in his sight. The Heathens very wrongly call one of their deities Verticordia^{f569}, from the power of turning the heart they ascribe to it; however, this shows their sense, that to turn the heart is the property of deity.

Ver. 2. *Every way of a man [is] right in his own eyes*, etc.] This is repeated, from (~~2010~~ Proverbs 16:2,25); for the confirmation of it; and that it might be observed and taken notice of, and men be brought under a conviction of it; which is not easily done, it being what affects all men: every man is conceited of himself and his own way, and is not easily persuaded off of it; his sinful ways are agreeable to him promising him pleasure, profit, or honour; and his self-righteous ways suit with the vain opinion he has of himself, whereby he promises himself eternal life and happiness. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it to this sense,

“every man seems righteous to himself;”

but the Lord pondereth the hearts: weighs them in the balance of righteousness and truth; considers them, having a perfect knowledge of them, and all the springs of action in them; and knows that every way of man is not right, though they may seem so to him.

Ver. 3. *To do justice and judgment*, etc.] The moral duties of religion, what is holy, just, and good, which the law requires; what is agreeably to both tables, piety towards God, and justice to men; that which is just and right between man and man; which, especially if done from right principles and with right views,

[is] more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice; not than any sacrifice; than the sacrifice of a broken heart, or the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, or of acts of goodness and beneficence, or of a man’s whole self to the Lord; but than ceremonial sacrifices; which, though of divine institution, and typical of Christ, and when offered up in the faith of him,

were acceptable to God, while in force; yet not when done without faith and in hypocrisy, and especially when done to cover and countenance immoral actions; and, even when compared with moral duties, the latter were preferable to them; (see ^{<0152>}1 Samuel 15:22) (^{<4123>}Mark 12:33).

Ver. 4. *An high look, and a proud heart*, etc.] The former is a sign of the latter, and commonly go together, and are both abominable to the Lord; (see ^{<0410>}Psalm 101:5 ^{<2166>}Proverbs 6:16,17). A man that looks above others, and with disdain upon them, shows that pride reigns in him, and swells his mind with a vain opinion of himself; this may be observed in every self-righteous man; the parable of the Pharisee and publican is a comment upon it; sometimes there may be a proud heart under a disguise of humility; but the pride of the heart is often discovered by the look of the eyes. It may be rendered, “the elevation of the eyes, and the enlargement of the heart”^{f570}; but not to be understood in a good sense, of the lifting up of the eyes in prayer to God, with faith and fear; nor of the enlargement of the heart with solid knowledge and wisdom, such as Solomon had; but in a bad sense, of the lofty looks and haughtiness of man towards his fellow creatures, and of his unbounded desires after filthy lucre or sinful lusts: the Targum renders it,

“the swelling of the heart,”

with pride and vanity;

[and] the ploughing of the wicked [is] sin; taken literally; not that it is so in itself; for it is a most useful invention, and exceeding beneficial to mankind, and is to be ascribed to God himself; and of this the Heathens are so sensible, that they have a deity to whom they attribute it, and whom they call Ceres^{f571}, from **çrj**, to plough; it only denotes that all the civil actions of a wicked man, one being put for all, are attended with sin; he sins in all he does. Or, metaphorically, for his schemes, contrivances, and projects, which are the ploughing of his mind; these are all sinful, or tend to that which is so. Some understand this particularly of his high look and proud heart, which are his ploughing and his sin; Ben Melech; and others of his ploughing, or persecuting and oppressing, the poor. The word is sometimes used for a lamp or light, and is so rendered here by some, “the light of the wicked [is] sin”^{f572}; their outward happiness and prosperity leads them into sin, involves them in guilt, and so brings them to ruin and

destruction: and this way go the Targum: Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Ver. 5. *The thoughts of the diligent [tend] only to plenteousness*, etc.] A man that is thoughtful and studious, and wisely forms schemes in his mind, and diligently pursues them; the issue of it is, generally speaking, prosperity and plenty: such a man is usually thriving and flourishing; and this holds good in things spiritual, as well as in things temporal, (⁴¹⁵³Matthew 25:29);

but of everyone [that is] hasty only to want; that is in haste to be rich, and is resolved to be so, right or wrong, he comes at last to poverty and want: or he who is rash and precipitate in acting, who never thinks before he acts, but rashly engages in an affair; or, however, does not give himself time enough to think it over, but, as soon as ever it has entered his thoughts, he immediately attempts to put it in execution; a man so thoughtless and inconsiderate, so rash and hasty, brings himself and family to poverty; (see ⁴¹¹¹Proverbs 20:21).

Ver. 6. *The getting of treasures by a lying tongue*, etc.] By telling lies in trade; by bearing false witness in a court of judicature; or by preaching false doctrines in the church of God:

[is] a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death: such treasures, though ever so great, are like any light thing, smoke or vapour, straw, stubble, chaff, or a feather, tossed about the wind; which is expressive of the instability uncertainty of riches ill gotten; they do not last long, but are taken away and carried off by one providence or another; and they are likewise harmful and pernicious; they issue in death: and those that seek after them, and obtain them in a bad way, are said to “seek death”: not intentionally, but eventually; this they certainly find, if grace prevent not; see (⁴⁰⁸⁵Proverbs 8:36). Jarchi reads it, they are the “snares of death” to him; and so the Septuagint version.

Ver. 7. *The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them*, etc.] Or cut them, so Ben Melech: dissect or “saw”¹⁵⁷³ them; cut them to the heart; that is, when the sins they have been guilty of, in robbing God of his due, or doing injury to men in their properties, cheating them or stealing from them, are set home on their consciences, they are in the utmost agonies and distress; it is as if a saw was drawn to and fro over them, and will be their case for ever without true repentance: this is the worm that never dies, and the fire that

is never quenched; this is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and is very just and righteous;

because they refuse to do judgment; to do that which is just between man and man, to let everyone enjoy his own property: as it is true of private robbers, so of men in public offices, whose business it is to defend men in the quiet possession of property; which, if they refuse to do, as it is a refusal to do judgment, it is in effect a robbery of them; and will be charged on their consciences at one time or another.

Ver. 8. *The way of man [is] froward and strange*, etc.] Not the way of any and every man; not the way of righteous and good men, of believers in Christ; who know him, the way, and walk in him and after him, and being led by him; who have his spirit to be their guide, and do walk in his ways, and find pleasure in them; the way of such is not froward or perverse, but upright and even, and is not strange, for the Lord knows and approves of it: but the way of wicked and impure men, as may be learned from the opposition in the next clause; the way of unregenerate men, who are gone out of the good way, and turned to their own way, which is according to the course of the world, and after the prince of it, and according to the flesh, and dictates of corrupt nature, which is the common and broad road that leads to destruction. This is a “froward” or perverse way, a way contrary to reason and truth; contrary to the word of God, and the directions of it; it is a crooked distorted path; it is not according to rule; it is a deviation from the way of God’s commandment, and is a “strange” one; the Scriptures know nothing of it, and do not point and direct unto it; it estranges a man from God, and carries him further and further off from him. It may be rendered, “perverse [is] the way of a man, even of a stranger”^{f574}; of one that is a stranger to God and godliness; to Christ and his Gospel; to the Spirit, and the operations of his grace on the heart; to his own heart, and his state and condition by nature; and to all good men, and all that is good;

but [as for] the pure, his work [is] right. God is pure, purity itself, in comparison of whom nothing is pure; and his work in creation, providence, and grace, is right; there is no unrighteousness in him; and this sense is favoured by the Septuagint and Arabic versions: or rather every good man, who, through the pure righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and through his precious blood being sprinkled on him, or rather through being washed in it, and through the grace of God bestowed on him, is pure, wholly

cleansed from sin; has a pure heart, speaks a pure language, and holds the mystery of faith in a pure conscience or conversation: and his work, or the work of God upon him, is right and good; or his work of faith, which he exercises on God, is hearty and genuine: and even his works, as the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, have it in the plural number; all his good works are right; being done from love, in faith, in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God.

Ver. 9. [*It is*] *better to dwell in a corner of the housetop*, etc.] The roofs of houses in Judea were that, encompassed with battlements, whither persons might retire for solitude, and sit in safety: and it is better to be in a corner of such a roof alone, and be exposed to scorching heat, to blustering winds, to thunder storms and showers of rain,

than with a brawling woman in a wide house; large and spacious, full of rooms, fit for a numerous family: or, “an house of society”,^{f575}; where many families might dwell and live sociably with each other; or a house where a man, his wife and family, might dwell together, and have communion with each other; it is opposed to the corner of the housetop, and the solitariness of it; as the scolding of the brawling woman, or “a woman of contentions”,^{f576}, who is always noisy and quarrelsome, her violent passions, her storming language, and thundering voice, are to the inclemencies of the heavens, to which a man on the housetop is exposed; and yet these are more eligible than the other; see (^{Q119}Proverbs 21:19 17:19:13).

Ver. 10. *The soul of the wicked desireth evil*, etc.] The evil of sin, it being natural to him; he chooses it, delights in it, craves after it, under a notion of pleasure or profit: or the evil of mischief; it is a sport and pastime to him to do injury to others; (see ^{Q103}Proverbs 10:23); he desires both the one and the other with all his soul; his heart is in it, he is set upon it, which shows him to be a wicked man;

his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes; not only he delights to do mischief to an enemy or a stranger, but even to a neighbour and friend; he will do him no kindness, though he asks it of him; he will show him no mercy, though an object of it; he will spare him not, but do him an injury, if he attempts to hinder or dissuade him from doing mischief, or reproves him for it.

Ver. 11. *When the scorner is punished*, etc.] Either by the immediate hand of God, or by the civil magistrate; he who scoffs at Deity, blasphemes the most High, mocks at all religion, despises dominion, and speaks evil of dignities:

the simple is made wise; who is weak and foolish, easily persuaded and drawn into sin, yet not hardened in it, but open to reproof and conviction; he takes notice of the punishment of scorners, and takes warning from it, and behaves more wisely and cautiously for the future; (see ~~20825~~ Proverbs 19:25);

and when the wise is instructed; by others, superior to him in wisdom; by the ministers of the Gospel, by reading and hearing the word of God, and the writings of good men; or by corrections and chastisements:

he receiveth knowledge; the wise man receives it, he attends to the instruction given him, and improves in knowledge: or rather the simple man gains knowledge by the instructions given to wise men; he learns by them, as well as by what he is taught himself. It is by some rendered, “when the wise prospers, he receiveth knowledge”ⁱ⁵⁷⁷ the simple man learns much both from the adversity and prosperity of others; and to this sense is the note of Gersom,

“when he sees how the ways of a wise man prosper, then he studies to get knowledge.”

Ver. 12. *The righteous [man] wisely considereth the house of the wicked*, etc.] Not so much the stately palace he lives in, and the furniture of it, as the glory, splendour, riches, and largeness of his family; the flourishing condition he and they are in: he considers how they came into it, the short continuance of it, and what the end will be, which in a short time will be ruin and destruction; and therefore he does not envy their present happiness, or fret at it. Gersom renders it,

“the righteous maketh the house of the wicked to prosper;”

as Joseph did Potiphar’s, and Jacob Laban’s; or rather the Lord made them to prosper for their sakes. Jarchi interprets the righteous of God himself; who gives his heart, or has it in his heart to cut off the house of the wicked, as follows;

[but God] overthroweth the wicked for [their] wickedness; or removes them into evil, as the Targum; into the evil of punishment, for the evil of sin. Aben Ezra supplies the word “God”, as we do; and understands it of God’s destroying wicked men for their sins, though they have flourished for a while in this world: but some interpret it of the righteous man, even of a righteous magistrate, who is prudent and diligent in his office; who looks into the houses of wicked men, and inquires who they are that are in them, and how they live; and what they have in their houses, whether stolen goods, the properties of others; or arms, either for treasonable practices or for robberies; and takes them and punishes them according to the laws of God and men.

Ver. 13. *Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor*, etc.] For want of bread; or, “of the weak”, as the Septuagint and other versions; for want of help and protection, when in the greatest distress; and, with the most pressing importunity, entreats his assistance, and yet refuses to hear him out: or, if he does, will not relieve him, which is all one as if he heard him not, or denied him a hearing;

he also shall cry himself; the Targum and Syriac version add, “unto God”. The sense is, that even such an one shall be brought into the like distressed circumstances, when he shall make application to God, and to his fellow creatures, for relief and assistance:

but shall not be heard; a deaf ear will be turned to him by both: the same measure he has measured shall be measured to him again; no mercy shall be shown to an unmerciful man, either by God or man; see (³¹²³James 2:13).

Ver. 14. *A gift in secret pacifieth anger*, etc.] Appeases an angry man; humbles and “brings [his anger] down”^{f578}, as Aben Ezra and Gersom observe the word signifies; which before rose very high, and showed itself in big words and disdainful looks, as proud wrath does; or extinguishes it, as the Targum and Vulgate Latin version render it, and very fitly. Anger is a fire in the breast; and a restraining or causing it to cease is properly expressed by an extinguishing of it: this a gift or present does, as it did in Esau from Jacob, in David from Abigail; but then it must be secretly given, otherwise it may more provoke; since it may show vanity in the giver, and covetousness in the receiver; and the former may have more honour than the latter. Some understand this of a gift for a bribe to a judge, to abate the severity of the sentence; and others of alms deeds to the poor, to pacify the anger of God^{f579}: Jarchi interprets it of alms; and the Jews write this

sentence upon the poor's box, understanding it in this sense; but the first sense is best;

and a reward in the bosom strong wrath: the same thing in different words; the meaning is, that a reward or gift, secretly conveyed into the bosom of an angry man, pacifies his wrath, when at the greatest height. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, understand it in a quite different sense, of a gift retained in the bosom, and not given, and render it thus, "he that spareth gifts stirreth up strong wrath".

Ver. 15. [*It is*] *joy to the, last to do judgment*, etc.] It is with pleasure he does it; he delights in the law of God, after the inward man, and finds much peace of mind and joy in the Holy Ghost in keeping it, and observing its commands, which are holy, just, and good; yea, it gives him pleasure to see justice done by others; both by private persons in their dealings with one another; and especially by judges putting the laws in execution, as their office requires; whereby much good comes to a nation in general, and to particular persons;

but destruction [shall be] to the workers of iniquity; that make a trade of sinning; whose whole life is a continued series of sin and iniquity; who take much pains in committing sin, and are constant at it; everlasting destruction is in their ways, and they lead unto it: or, "terror"^{f580} shall be to them; terror of mind now at times, in opposition to the joy and peace a good man finds; and dreadful horror at death and to all eternity: or, as it is joy to a just man to see public justice done, and good laws put in execution, it is a terror to evildoers, (^{e513b}Romans 13:3).

Ver. 16. *The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding*, etc.] The way of getting understanding, the good ways and word of God; that wanders from the house of God, the assembly of the saints, where the Gospel is preached, and the ordinances are administered; that, instead of attending on them, where he might gain the understanding of divine and spiritual things, wanders about in the fields, gets into bad company, walks with them in their ways, and turns to his own, as a sheep that goes astray: he

shall remain in the congregation of the dead; among those that are spiritually dead, dead in trespasses and sins; such an one he himself is, and such he is like to continue, and not be written among the living in Jerusalem; or among those who die the second and eternal death, among

the damned in hell; so Jarchi interprets it of the congregation of hell; and a large congregation that will be, but dreadful to have an abode with them. The words are rendered by the Septuagint, and the versions that follow that, “shall rest in the congregation of the giants”; which some interpret of devils, and others of the giants of the old world^{f581}, damned spirits: resting with them does not design peace and quietness, for there will be none there; but a fixed settled abode, in opposition to wandering, in the preceding clause.

Ver. 17. *He that loveth pleasure [shall be] a poor man*, etc.] Or “sport”^{f582} and pastime, music and dancing, cards and dice, hunting and hawking, and other sensual gratifications; a man that indulges himself in these things, and spends his time and his money in such a way, is very likely to be a poor man, and generally is so in the issue;

he that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich; that is, that loves them immoderately; otherwise in moderation they may be both loved and used; “wine” and “oil” are put for high living, luxurious feasts, costly entertainments; which being so, and continually made, will not suffer a man to be rich. The sense is, that an epicure, one that makes a god of his belly, that is both a winebibber and a glutton, that indulges to rich eating and drinking, in course lessens his substance, and leaves little for his heir: and this holds good with respect to spiritual as to temporal things; such persons are poor, and not rich in spiritual things, that indulge to carnal pleasure, and the gratification of their sensual appetite.

Ver. 18. *The wicked [shall be] a ransom for the righteous*, etc.] Not to make satisfaction for them, as Christ is a ransom for his people; but as a ransom is in the room of another, so the wicked cometh in the stead of the righteous, and into the trouble he is delivered from; as Haman for Mordecai, which instance Jarchi mentions; (see ^{<0108>}Proverbs 11:8); or when a body of people are threatened with divine vengeance; and this falls upon the wicked, whose sins caused it, and the righteous are delivered from it; as in the case of Achan, and the seven sons of Saul, (^{<0125>}Joshua 7:26 ^{<0101>}2 Samuel 21:1-6). And sometimes God turns the wrath of the princes of the earth from his own people, and causes it to fall upon the wicked, and so they are a ransom for them; as Sennacherib intended the destruction of the Jews, but was called off in providence to fall upon the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Sabeans, and therefore they are said to be a ransom for them; (see ^{<0113>}Isaiah 43:3); and sometimes wicked men are the means of a

ransom or deliverance of the righteous, as Cyrus was of the Jews: and it may be considered, as the word used signifies a “cover”^{f583}, whether it will not bear this sense, that the wicked are a cover for the righteous, and oftentimes protect and defend them; so the earth helped the woman, (⁶¹²⁶Revelation 12:16);

and the transgressor for the upright; which are but different characters of the same persons, bad and good men; and the sense is the same as before.

Ver. 19. [*It is better to dwell in the wilderness*, etc.] Where persons live without shelter, and are not only exposed to storms and tempests, but to beasts of prey; where is want of the necessaries of life, and no society; where no “speech” is, as the word^{f584} for wilderness may signify; yet it is better to dwell in such a place, where no human voice is heard,

than with a contentious and an angry woman; that is always brawling and scolding, ever in a quarrelsome and angry disposition, and provoking to anger all about her; (see Gill on “³¹⁰⁹Proverbs 21:9”). In a mystical sense, it is better to be with the church in the wilderness, (⁶¹²⁴Revelation 12:14); than with the furious, bloodthirsty, and persecuting church of Rome, in all its worldly glory and splendour.

Ver. 20. [*There is a treasure to be desired*, etc.] Gold, silver, jewels, and precious stones; all sorts food, as Aben Ezra explains it, and rich and costly, raiment; all which may be lawfully desired and sought after, and, when obtained, laid up for future use; which may be spared for their own service and that of posterity: but there are riches of grace, a pearl of great price and treasure in heaven, more desirable than these, (⁴⁰⁶⁹Matthew 6:19,20);

and oil in the dwelling of the wise; which is particularly mentioned, because a principal blessing of the land of Canaan; much used for food, and was for delight and refreshment: and something of this was in the house of every wise, provident, and industrious man, for the use of him and his family; even though he lived but in a “cottage”, as the word^{f585} signifies this is an emblem of the grace of God, which is sometimes compared to oil; which a wise man is chiefly concerned, that it may be in his heart, in his house, and in his family;

but a foolish man spendeth it up; the oil; he swallows it up at once, as soon as he has got it, and wastes and lavishes away what his wise father had provided for him. This may refer not to oil only, but to the desired treasure,

wealth, riches, substance of every sort, he is heir to and becomes possessed of; and which, in a spiritual sense, may be applied to a foolish wicked man, who misspends his time, neglects the means of grace, and all opportunities by which men grow rich and wise in spiritual things; (see ^{<4120>}Matthew 25:1-10).

Ver. 21. *He that followeth after righteousness and mercy*, etc.] Is eager, diligent, and fervent in his pursuit of these things: “after righteousness”; not a legal righteousness, such as the Jews followed after, but did not attain to; because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, (^{<4081>}Romans 9:31,32); by which there is no righteousness or justification before God; but an evangelical righteousness, the righteousness of Christ; (see ^{<2501>}Isaiah 51:1). To follow after it is to seek, desire, and thirst after it, (^{<4186>}Matthew 5:6 6:33); which supposes a want of righteousness, a sense of that want; a view of a righteousness without them, even in Christ; a love and liking of it, and therefore follow after it; it being pure, perfect, agreeably to the law and justice of God, which justifies now, and will answer for them in a time to come. And such follow after “mercy” or “grace”,^{f586}; seeing themselves miserable by sin, and having no merit of their own, apply to God for pardoning grace and mercy; and seek for righteousness in a way of grace, as a free gift; and for the whole of salvation in the same way, as well as for all grace and fresh supplies of it: it may be understood, in consequence of the former, of a diligent and eager performance of works of righteousness and mercy, and an earnest desire after both. And such a man

findeth life, righteousness, and honour; which is more than he is said to follow after: “life” spiritual, which he has from Christ by his Spirit, and which is owing to the grace and mercy of God; and eternal life, through the righteousness of Christ, in whom it is only to be found, and from whom all the blessings of life come; who has it in his hands to give, and does give it to all his people: “righteousness” also he finds, not in himself, nor by the works of the law, but in Christ; being directed to him by the Spirit and word of God; and an excellent finding this is; a robe of righteousness, which he lays hold upon, puts on, and rejoices in: and likewise “honour”, through relation to God and Christ; through grace received from them; by enjoying the presence of them, and being made a king and priest to God; and hereafter will be placed at Christ’s right hand, inherit the kingdom of glory, sit on the same throne with Christ, and wear the crown of life and righteousness.

Ver. 22. *A wise [man] scaleth the city of the mighty*, etc.] Which makes good what is elsewhere said, that “wisdom is better than strength”, (^{<2096>}Ecclesiastes 9:16); and sometimes more is done by prudence and wisdom, by art and cunning, by schemes and stratagems, than by power and force; especially in military affairs, and particularly in besieging and taking fortified cities; when one wise man, by his wisdom, may so order and manage things, as to be able, with a few under his command, to mount the walls of a city and take it, though defended by a mighty garrison in it. This may be applied to, our Lord Jesus Christ entering into the city of a man’s heart, possessed by the strong man armed; overcoming him, taking from him his armour, and dividing his spoil, (^{<212>}Luke 11:21,22); compare with this (^{<2094>}Ecclesiastes 9:14, 15);

and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof; the strong walls, bulwarks, and such fortifications, in which the mighty in the city placed their confidence: and the like does Christ, when he enters into the heart of a sinner by his word and spirit; he destroys all its former strong confidences, and brings it into subjection to himself, (^{<2704>}2 Corinthians 10:4,5).

Ver. 23. *Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue*, etc.] Guards the one and bridles the other; is careful of what he says, that it is truth, and without dissimulation and guile; and is not injurious to the characters of men, and is not offensive and provoking; who abstains from ill and wrathful language, and which tends to stir up wrath and contention. Aben Ezra distinguishes between the mouth and tongue, and interprets it, that keeps his mouth from eating, that is, immoderately and intemperately; and his tongue from speaking evil: but it is best to understand both of the same thing, of speech or language, which when a man is careful of, he

keepeth his soul from troubles; his conscience clear of guilt and distress, and his person from being concerned in quarrels, contentions, and lawsuits, which such who give their tongues too much liberty are involved in.

Ver. 24. *Proud [and] haughty scorner [is] his name*, etc.] He shall be called a proud fool, a haughty fellow, a scornful blockhead; he shall get himself an ill name, and be treated with contempt;

who dealeth in proud wrath; whose pride shows itself in wrathful expressions and actions; who is proud and passionate in all his dealings with men, and who as it were makes a trade of pride and passion: to none

is this character more applicable than to antichrist, the man of sin, that sits in the seat of the scornful; exalts himself above all that is called God, has a mouth speaking blasphemies, and a look more stout than his fellows, and deals in proud wrath against the saints of the most High.

Ver. 25. *The desire of the slothful killeth him*, etc.] His desire after food and raiment, and riches; for because he cannot have what he desires, being unwilling to work for them, it frets and vexes him to death, or puts him upon unlawful methods to obtain them, which bring him to a shameful death; (see ^{אִיִּם} Proverbs 13:4);

for his hands refuse to labour; when he is ordered by his superiors, or his wants are such as call for labour; and he seems to be willing and desirous of it, necessity obliging to it, yet he cannot bring his hands to it; these do in effect say, as Aben Ezra observes, Thou shall not do it. Maimonides says this is to be understood of sloth in seeking wisdom ^{f587}.

Ver. 26. *He coveteth greedily all the day long*, etc.] The slothful man does, as he has nothing to do to employ his time and his thoughts with; he is always craving something to eat and drink, or wishing he had such an estate, or so much wealth and riches, that he might live as such and such persons do; and this is what his head runs upon all the day long;

but the righteous giveth and spareth not; not gives to the slothful, which does not restrain his desire, as Aben Ezra interprets it; but to the poor and necessitous, to proper objects; a good man will work with his hands, that he may have a sufficiency for himself and his family, and may have something to give to others that are in want; and “he spares not”, or withholds not his hands, neither from working nor from giving.

Ver. 27. *The sacrifice of the wicked [is] abomination*, etc.] That is, to the Lord, as in (^{אִיִּם} Proverbs 15:8); and as it is here added in the Septuagint and Arabic versions;

how much more, [when] he bringeth it with a wicked mind? the Arabic version is, “with a mind alien from the law”; or when it is not brought according to law; when it is a corrupt thing, that which is torn, lame, or sick, or robbery for burnt sacrifice; when it is done with an evil intention, to cover sin, to atone for without repenting of it or forsaking it; that they may go on in sin with impunity, and be allowed to commit it; for which cause Balak and Balsam offered sacrifices, which is the instance Jarchi produces; and indeed every religious action not done in faith, and love, and

sincerity, and with a view to the glory of God, but in hypocrisy and with selfish views, in order to procure acceptance with God and justification in his sight; setting aside the righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction of the son of God, is done with a wicked mind, and is an abomination to the Lord. Some render it, “even though he brings it diligently”, or “with great art and skill”^{f588}; is constant at his devotion, and carries it so artfully, and with such a show of religion, as to deceive men, yet he cannot deceive the Lord.

Ver. 28. *A false witness shall perish*, etc.] As witness he shall perish in his reputation, no credit shall be given him, he shall not be admitted an evidence, or a witness in any cause, being found a false one; and as a man, he shall be punished in body or estate by the civil magistrate, and his soul shall perish eternally, unless he has true repentance for his sin: or, a witness of lies shall perish^{f589} it may be applied to any teacher of false doctrine; and to the man of sin, and his followers, that speak lies in hypocrisy; everyone that loves and makes a lie shall die the second death, and be excluded from eternal happiness, ([Ⓜ]Revelation 21:8,27);

but the man that heareth; before he speaks, and speaks what he hears, and does not devise things himself; but witnesses the truth, and nothing else, to the best of his knowledge:

speaketh constantly; invariably and consistently, what is all of a piece, and by which he ah, des; or “continually”, as Jarchi; or “for ever”; he is made use of as a witness as long as he lives, whenever there is occasion for him; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “he speaks victory”; his testimony, being true and valid, carries the cause: it, may be applied to a faithful teacher, who hearkens to the word of God, and speaks according to that; such an one speaks out, he doctrine of the word constantly, boldly, with certainty, without any hesitation or staggering.

Ver. 29. *A wicked man hardeneth his face*, etc.] Against all corrections and reproofs of parents, masters, ministers, and others; he blushes not at sins committed, and is not ashamed of them, but glories in them: or, he “strengthens with his face”^{f590}; he puts an impudent face upon his words, and confirms them by his impudence; if he tells the most notorious lies, and says things the most shameful and scandalous, his countenance does not alter, by which he would be thought to have spoken what is right and true;

but [as for] the upright, he directeth his way; or “his ways”^{f591}; according to the various reading; the man that is upright in heart, and walks uprightly, he directs his way according to the word of God; and, if he does amiss, when sensible he is ashamed of it, and amends.

Ver. 30. [*There is no wisdom nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord.*] No human schemes whatever, formed with the greatest wisdom and prudence, can ever prevail against God, or set aside or hinder the execution of any design of his; nothing that is pointed against his church, his cause, and interest, his truths and ordinances, in the issue shall succeed; all that are found fighters against him shall not prosper, let them be men of ever so much sagacity and wisdom; though there may be ever so many devices in a man’s heart, and these ever so well planned, they shall never defeat the counsel of the Lord; see (^{2302B}Proverbs 19:21). The Targum is,

“there is no wisdom, etc. as God’s;”

and so the Syriac version, “as the Lord’s”; there is none like his, there is none to be compared with his; there is none of any value and worth but his; all is folly in comparison of that: or there is none “before the Lord”^{f592}; no wisdom of the creature can stand before him, it presently vanishes and disappears.

Ver. 31. *The horse [is] prepared against the day of battle*, etc.] The horse is a warlike creature, and was much used formerly, as now, in war; these are prepared against the day of battle, to mount the cavalry with; and men are apt to put too great confidence in them: this is mentioned instead of all other military preparations and instruments of war;

but safety [is] of the Lord; a horse is a vain thing for safety, (^{19317B}Psalm 33:17); victory is only of the Lord; salvation depends upon him; it is he that covers men’s heads in the day of battle, and gives them victory over their enemies: or “salvation [is] of the Lord”^{f593}; this is true of spiritual and eternal salvation, as well as of temporal salvation; it is of the Lord, Father, Son and Spirit; and so is the safety of the saints; and their final perseverance to eternal glory, which is owing to the love of God, covenant interest, security in Christ, the grace of the Spirit, and the power of God; (see ^{284B}Hosea 14:3).

CHAPTER 22

Ver. 1. *A [good] name [is] rather to be chosen than great riches*, etc.]

The word “good” is not in the text, but is rightly supplied, as it is by the Targum, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin versions; for it is not any name that is more eligible than riches; nor is it a need name among any sort of persons; for to have a good name with some turns to a man’s reproach rather than to his credit; but a good name among good men, a name in the house of God, which is better than sons and daughters; a new name, the name of the children of God, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it; this is to be preferred to a multitude of riches: it is not to be procured by them, and is where they are not, or are lost, but this continues; (see ~~2001~~ Ecclesiastes 7:1);

[and] loving favour rather them silver and gold; favour with God and man, especially with God, whose loving kindness is better than life, and all the enjoyments of it: or, as it may be rendered, “grace [is] better than silver and gold”^{f594}; the grace of God through Christ, the grace of Christ, in whom all fulness of it dwells, the grace of the Spirit of Christ; faith is more precious than gold that perisheth; and if a man would give all the substance of his house for love it would be contemned; the Spirit and his grace are not to be purchased for money.

Ver. 2. *The rich and poor meet together*, etc.] In an hostile way, as some; they rush upon one another; the rich despise the poor, and the poor envy the rich; they cannot speak well one of another, as the Arabic version; or they are dependent on one another, they cannot do without each other; as in the natural body one member cannot say to another, I have no need of thee; so, in the body politic, the rich and the poor cannot say they have no need of one another; the rich stand in need of the poor to till their land, to plough and sow, and do all other servile works for them; and the poor have need of the rich to employ them; have need of their money as their wages for their work, to support themselves and families with: or they sometimes change conditions, and so meet; the poor grow rich, and the rich become poor; the one goes uphill and the other downhill, and so meet in their passage. They meet together in all places of the earth; go where you will, there are rich and poor. The godly rich and poor meet together in one place to worship God; they meet together in a Gospel church state, enjoying the

same privileges and ordinances; and will all meet the Lord, and all meet together at his judgment seat; and they will meet in heaven, and be together to all eternity, where the distinction will cease: and the wicked rich and poor meet together to commit sin; and they meet together in the grave^{f595}, where there is no difference; and they will meet at the bar of God at the last day, and in hell, where they will be together for evermore;

the Lord [is] the Maker of them all: not only as men, but as rich men and poor men; God gives riches to whom he pleases, and poverty to whom he pleases; riches and poverty are according to the order of divine Providence; and he can and does change scenes at his pleasure; wherefore the rich should consider themselves as dependent on him, and not despise and crush the poor; and the poor should be content with their state, as being allotted to them by the Lord, who can alter it when he thinks fit.

Ver. 3. *A prudent [man] foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself*, etc.] A wise man, whose eyes are in his head, who looks about him and before him, and is cautious and careful of his conduct and behaviour; he foresees the evil of sin he is liable to be drawn into by such and such company, snares, and temptations; and therefore he keeps from them, and abstains from all appearance of evil, or what would lead him to it; and he foresees the evil of punishment, or the judgments of God that are coming on for sin; and he betakes himself to the Lord, to those hiding places and chambers of retreat and protection he has provided for his people, till the indignation be overpast; (see ²³⁵⁰Isaiah 26:20);

but the simple pass on, and are punished: foolish persons, devoid of the grace of God and the fear of him, go on careless and unconcerned in their sinful course of life, transgressing the law of God; they proceed from evil to evil, from lesser to greater sins; they go on in the broad road to destruction, and are punished with temporal judgments here, and with everlasting destruction hereafter.

Ver. 4. *By humility [and] the fear of the Lord*, etc.] Some render it, “the reward of humility, which [is] the fear of the Lord”^{f596}; so the Targum; an humble man is blessed with it. Jarchi’s note is,

“because of humility, the fear of the Lord comes;”

humility leads on to the fear of the Lord; he that behaves humbly towards man comes at length to fear the Lord, and be truly religious: though these are rather to be considered as the graces of the Spirit of God, which go

together where there is one, there is the other; he that is humbled under a sense of sin, and his own unworthiness, fears the Lord; and he that fears the Lord, and his goodness, will walk humbly before him; they both flow from the grace of God, are very ornamental, and attended with the following happy consequences;

[are] riches, and honour, and life; spiritual riches, the riches of grace and glory; honour with God and men now, and everlasting life in the world to come.

Ver. 5. *Thorns [and] snares [are] in the way of the froward*, etc.] Who walks contrary to the will and law of God; such a man meets with troubles, which are as thorns, grieving and distressing to him; and is taken in snares, and brought into difficulties, out of which he is not easily extricated; the thorns of affliction, and the snares of Satan: by the one his way is hedged up, and in the other his feet are taken;

he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them; he that is concerned for the good of his soul, is careful for the welfare of that, and takes heed to his ways where and how he walks, will be far both from the way of the froward, and from the thorns and snares which are in his way.

Ver. 6. *Train up a child in the way he should go*, etc.] As Abraham trained up his children, and those born in his house, in the way of the Lord, in the paths of justice and judgment; which are the ways in which they should go, and which will be to their profit and advantage; see (⁰¹⁴⁴Genesis 14:14 18:19); and which is the duty of parents and masters in all ages, and under the present Gospel dispensation, even to bring such who are under their care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, (⁰⁰⁶Ephesians 6:4); by praying with them and for them, by bringing them under the means of grace, the ministry of the word, by instructing them in the principles of religion, teaching them their duty to God and man, and setting them good examples of a holy life and conversation; and this is to be done according to their capacity, and as they are able to understand and receive the instructions given them: “according to the mouth of his way”^{f597}, as it may be literally rendered; as soon as he is able to speak or go, even from his infancy; or as children are fed by little bits, or a little at a time, as their mouths can receive it;

and when he is old he will not depart from it; not easily, nor ordinarily; there are exceptions to this observation; but generally, where there is a

good education, the impressions of it do not easily wear off, nor do men ordinarily forsake a good way they have been brought up in^{f598}; and, however, when, being come to years of maturity and understanding, their hearts are seasoned with the grace of God, they are then enabled to put that in practice which before they had only in theory, and so continue in the paths of truth and holiness.

Ver. 7. *The rich ruleth over the poor*, etc.] Usurps a dominion over them, and exercises it in a rigorous, oppressive, and tyrannical manner; otherwise they are generally the rich that rule, and if they rule well, in a lawful, gentle, and righteous manner, it is commendable;

and the borrower [is] servant to the lender; being under obligation to him, he is forced to be subject to him, and comply with his humours, and do and say as he would have him; it was a happiness promised to the Israelites, that they should lend to many nations, but not borrow, (^{<6596>}Deuteronomy 15:6); compare with this (^{<6604>}Nehemiah 5:4,5).

Ver. 8. *He that soweth iniquity^{f599} shall reap vanity*, etc.] He that practises sin, and is frequent in the commission of it; indulges to it in a profuse way, as the sower plentifully scatters his seed; such shall reaper possess nothing but sin and wickedness; for, what a man sows, that shall he reap; he shall eat the fruit of his doings, and have the reward of his works; (see ^{<6608>}Job 4:8 ^{<6607>}Galatians 6:7,8); or “nothing”,^{f600} mere emptiness; it shall not answer; he shall have in the end neither pleasure nor profit, but the contrary; “shall reap evil things”, as the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions render it;

and the rod of his anger shall fail; with which he has ruled and smitten others in an angry and cruel manner; this shall be taken from him; his authority shall fail, and he shall become subject to others, and be used in like manner; (see ^{<6604>}Isaiah 14:4-6). R. Joseph Kimchi interprets it of “the rod of the increase” of the earth, or the rod or flail with which the fruits of the earth are threshed or beaten out, which should fail before they were reaped; and Schultens^{f601} has reference to the same, and gives the sense, that a wicked man that sows iniquity, when he thinks his harvest is ripe, shall be beaten with the flail, by which he shall be consumed; and he that threshed others shall be threshed himself.

Ver. 9. *He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed*, etc.] Or “a good eye”,^{f602}; who looks about him for proper objects to do good unto; looks

pleasantly on them, and deals out cheerfully and bountifully to them; he shall be blessed with an increase of temporal good things, with spiritual blessings, and with eternal glory and happiness; when he does what he does from principles of grace, with a view to the glory of God, not depending on what he does, but upon the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ;

for he giveth of his bread to the poor; what is his own and a part of it; not all, for he reserves some as he ought for himself and his; but he does not eat his morsel alone, he gives of it to the necessitous; his beneficent hand is a proof of his bountiful eye and liberal heart.

Ver. 10. *Cast out the scorner*, etc.] That makes a mock at sin, a jest at religion, and scoffs at all good men, and everything serious and spiritual; cast such an one out of all company and conversation; out of the family, as mocking Ishmael was cast out of Abraham's family; and out of the church, and all religious societies. Jarchi interprets it of the evil imagination or corruption of nature; but this will continue with a man as long as he lives, and, though it may be weakened and subdued, it is not cast out;

and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease; which are caused by the scorner, who stirs up contention and strife in all company where he is, in families, and churches; and is continually casting reproach on good men and things; but, when he is cast out, everything of this nature ceases, and peace and love take place.

Ver. 11. *He that loveth pureness of heart*, etc.] Though man's heart is naturally impure, and all that is in it, the thoughts, affections, mind, conscience, understanding, and will; yet there is such a thing as pureness of heart; as where the grace of God is; where there it pure love to God, Christ, and to holy and heavenly things and persons; where there is pure and unfeigned faith in Christ, and a purifying hope of eternal life by him; where the Holy Spirit dwells as a sanctifier, and Christ dwells by faith; where there is sincerity and integrity; and where the heart is sprinkled by the blood of Christ from an evil conscience: and, though none are entirely free from impurity of flesh and spirit, yet every good man hates the impurity that is in him, and loves purity, and is desirous of it, and makes use of all means for it; and he loves a man of a pure heart, as Aben Ezra interprets it; he loves pureness of heart in himself and others. Some versions understand this of God: the Septuagint and Arabic versions are, "God loveth holy hearts"; and so the Targum,

“God loveth the pure in heart:”

the Syriac version differs,

“he loves God that is pure in heart;”

but all wrong; the sense is as before given;

[for] the grace of his lips; or, “grace [is in] his lips”; or, “his lips [are] grace”^{f603}, or gracious; as the lips of Christ, though in a greater measure and degree, (^{98B}Psalm 45:2); as is a man’s heart, so are his lips, A man of a pure heart will speak a pure language; a good man will talk of good things; a wise man of wisdom, and a gracious man of the grace of God; of the doctrines of grace he has received; of the blessings of grace bestowed on him; of the promises of grace applied unto him; of the experiences of grace he has been favoured with; of things grateful and acceptable to others, which minister grace, and are to the use of edifying;

the king [shall be] his friend; carry himself friendly to him, admit him to familiarity with him, take him into his court, and make him of his privy council; this is what a king should do, and what a wise and good king will do, and it is his interest so to do: a man of an upright heart, and of a graceful speech, is or should be regarded by princes; as Hushai the Archite by David; and Daniel even by Nebuchadnezzar, a Heathen king. Jarchi’s note is,

“the holy blessed God loves and embraces him;”

and this sense may very well be received: the Lord loves purity of heart; he is good to them that are of a clean heart; he loves graceful lips, or lips speaking grace, in prayer, praise, or Christian conversation: he is a friend to such; to the pure he shows himself pure; the pure in heart shall see him, and ever dwell with him: Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, loves purity and righteousness, and hates iniquity; the lips of his people are pleasing to him, they are like a thread of scarlet; he loves to hear their voice, especially speaking of his own grace; he is a friend unto them, one that loves at all times, and sticks closer than a brother.

Ver. 12. *The eyes of the Lord preserve knowledge*, etc.] That is, the providence of God, whose eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth; these preserve the knowledge of himself, even among the Heathens in some measure; for what may be known of God is manifest in them, and showed

to them: more particularly his providence has preserved the Scriptures, the means of knowledge, which men would have destroyed; and preserves men of knowledge, as Aben Ezra interprets it, the ministers of the word, the stars he holds in his right hand; and he preserves spiritual and experimental knowledge in the hearts of his people, and causes it to increase; and continues his Gospel and a Gospel ministry in the world, till they all come to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God. Or his eyes observe, look unto with delight and pleasure, knowledge and men of knowledge, that know him, and do his will;

and he overthroweth the words of the transgressor; the perfidious, treacherous man; the false teacher, that corrupts the word of God, and handles it deceitfully: the doctrines of such he overthrows, and confutes, and brings to nothing, by his Spirit in his faithful ministers; and causes truth to prevail, and all iniquity to stop its mouth: particularly the words and doctrines of the great transgressor, the lawless and wicked one, the man of sin, antichrist; these have been exposed and overthrown already, and will be more and more so in God's due time.

Ver. 13. *The slothful [man] saith, [there is] a lion without*, etc.] Or, "in the street". This he says within himself; or to those who call out to him, and put him on doing the business of his proper calling, whether in the field or elsewhere, which, through his slothfulness, he has a disinclination to; and therefore frames excuses, and suggests this and that difficulty or danger in the way, expressed by a "lion without"; and which shows the folly and weakness of his excuses, since lions do not usually walk in cities, towns, and villages, and in the streets of them, but in woods and mountains;

I shall be slain in the streets; by the lion there; or I shall never be able to get over the difficulties, and through the dangers, which attending to business will expose me to. Some apply this to the difficulties that slothful persons imagine in the learning of languages, arts, and sciences; as Jarchi applies it to the learning of the law.

Ver. 14. *The mouth of strange women [is] a deep pit*, etc.] The mouth of harlots; the kisses of their mouth, their fair speech and flattering words, their amorous talk, and lascivious and wanton language, ensnare and draw unwary persons to commit lewdness with them, which bring them into a pit of ruin and destruction; a filthy one, and very deep, out of which it is not easy nor usual to be extricated: the allusion is to beasts taken in a pit dug

for them; and these are as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed;

he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein; who has been guilty of other sins, and such as have caused the Lord to abhor him, and therefore leaves him to fall into this: one sin not only leads on to another, but is the punishment of another; men are seldom guilty of this sin of whoredom, but who have been first abandoned to other vices very provoking to God; (see ^{<2076>}Ecclesiastes 7:26). Jarchi interprets all this of idolatry; and it may be very well applied to the whore of Rome, and the harlots she is mother of; who, by her fair words and false doctrines, by her mouth speaking blasphemies and lies in hypocrisy, by her golden cup in her hand full of abomination and filthiness of fornication, and by her sorceries, have deceived many, and brought them into the pit of perdition and ruin: and these are such whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life; but are rejected of God, and given up to believe a lie, that they might be damned, (^{<6704>}Revelation 17:4,5,8 ^{<5121>}2 Thessalonians 2:11,12).

Ver. 15. *Foolishness [is] bound in the heart of a child*, etc.] That is, sin, the greatest of all folly; this is naturally in the heart of man; it is in the heart of a child, it is in him from his infancy; it is bound in his heart, it is rooted and riveted in him, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; it is what cleaves close to him, and he has a strong affection for and desire after: the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, (^{<0082>}Genesis 8:21); so that he is not easily brought off of sin, or becomes wise;

[but] the rod of correction shall drive it far from him; the rod used by parents, for the correction of sin and folly, is a means of making children wise, and of restraining the folly that is bound up in them; and of reclaiming them from those sinful ways, which the folly of their hearts leads them to, and so in some measure of driving it far from them.

Ver. 16. *He that oppresseth the poor to increase his [riches]*, etc.] By taking away from them the little they have; by keeping back their hire, defrauding them of the just wages of their labours; or by usury and extortion, or any other unjust method, whereby they distress the poor, and enrich themselves;

[and] he that giveth to the rich [shall] surely [come] to want: that gives to those that are richer than he; or that are in greater power and authority, that they may protect him in the possession of his ill gotten riches; yet,

after all, it shall not thrive and prosper with him, it will all issue in poverty and want: or, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “he shall give to one more rich, and shall want”; he shall be forced to give it to another richer than he, and of greater power, and so shall get nothing by his oppression of the poor; but as he has served the poor, so shall he be served himself, and be brought to beggary and want; (see ^{<A113>}Proverbs 21:13).

Ver. 17. *Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise*, etc.] Here begins a new part or division of this book. According to some, the “third”; the “first” ending with (^{<A108>}Proverbs 9:18), the “second” at (^{<A1216>}Proverbs 22:16), and a “third”, beginning here, and ending with (^{<A1041>}Proverbs 24:34). It is certain that what follows from hence to the end of that is written in another style, by way of exhortation, caution; and instruction, and is directed to particular persons: as here an exhortation is made to Solomon’s son, or to those that attended his instruction; or rather to the children of Wisdom, that is, Christ; to listen attentively to “the words of the wise”; of Solomon, and other wise men before him, or contemporary with him; or rather of Wisdom and her maidens, Christ, and the wise men sent by him; who are made wise to salvation, and furnished for every good work by him, from whom the words of the wise come; and who speak the wisdom of God in a mystery; and whose doctrines are to be heard and received, not as the word of men, but as the word of God;

and apply thine heart unto my knowledge; the knowledge of divine and spiritual things Christ instructs in, and the knowledge of himself; which is preferable to all other knowledge, and to thousands of gold and silver; and in comparison of which all things are but loss and dung; and therefore should be applied unto with intenseness of mind, and cordially received.

Ver. 18. *For [it is] a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee*, etc.] Or, “in thy belly”^{<A604>}. That is, in thine heart, in the inmost recesses of it; where the words or doctrines of the wise should be received in the love of them, and carefully laid up and retained; which will upon reflection yield much pleasure, like Ezekiel’s roll, which was in his belly as honey for sweetness; and which also is very profitable as an antidote against sin, (^{<A3911>}Psalm 119:11);

they shall withal be fitted in thy lips; become them, and be suitable and graceful to them: or, “shall be ordered [and disposed] in” or “by thy lips”^{<A605>}; being received into the heart, and digested there, they shall easily and freely go off the tongue, which shall be as the pen of a ready writer;

they shall be delivered in a regular manner, with great liberty and facility; by a good digestion of Gospel truths, and a comfortable experience of them, persons become apt to teach others.

Ver. 19. *That thy trust may be in the Lord*, etc.] By means of the words of the wise, or doctrines of the Gospel, faith in Christ is first had; men are directed and encouraged hereby to believe in him; and by the same means faith is increased, confirmed, and established. This is the end of penning the Scriptures, and of the Gospel ministry, as follows:

I have made known to thee this day, even to thee; the said words and doctrines in the ministry of the word, by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of them; giving not only a notional, but a spiritual and experimental knowledge of them. The Lord has particular persons to whom he will make known these things in a saving way; it is “to thee, even to thee”; and to everyone whom God has chosen, and Christ has redeemed: and he has particular times and seasons for it, “this day”; which is a time of life and love; when darkness is removed, and the light of grace shines, and makes it day; and may respect the whole Gospel dispensation, which is the accepted time and day of salvation.

Ver. 20. *Have not I written to thee excellent things*, etc.] In the Scriptures. Some render it, “three things”^{f606}; and think that Solomon refers to the three divisions of the Scriptures among the Jews, the law, the prophets, and holy writings; so Jarchi; but some of those writings then were not: or to the three books wrote by him; the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. Others render it, “in a threefold way”^{f607}, as the Targum and several versions; that is, in various ways, in different forms and styles, in order the better to inform and instruct. But it is best, with Kimchi, Gersom, and Ben Melech, to render it, “excellent things”, as we do; such are the truths of the Gospel; they are more excellent than those that are only known by the light of nature, or by the law of Moses: such as suspect the love and grace of God; the person and offices of Christ; peace, pardon, righteousness, atonement, life and salvation, by him. And these are said to lie

in counsels and knowledge; in disclosing the counsels of God, according to which they are; in giving the best of counsels to men; to perishing sinners, to look to Christ for salvation; to naked ones, to buy of him white raiment, or the robe of his righteousness; to guilty and filthy ones, to apply to his blood for pardon and cleansing; to hungry and thirsty ones, to come unto him for food, the bread of life, and water of life; and to weary ones, to him

for rest; and all to do their duty both to God and men: and they also respect knowledge; the knowledge of divine and heavenly things; the knowledge of God in Christ, and of his perfections, as displayed in his salvation; the knowledge of Christ, what he is in himself, what he has done for his people, and is unto them; and especially the knowledge of salvation by him; all which the Gospel is a means of.

Ver. 21. *That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth,* etc.] Such are the doctrines of the Gospel; they are “the words of truth”; are written in the Scriptures of truth; come from the God of truth; the subject matter of which is Christ, who is the truth, and which the Spirit of truth leads into: there is a “certainty” in these; they are in the sure word of prophecy; are contained in the inspired and infallible word of God, and are no other than the Gospel of God; nothing is more sure than that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and truly and properly God; and that salvation is alone by him; and that whoever believes in him shall be saved; with many other things, which ministers of the word should affirm with boldness and assurance; and which others may come to a certain knowledge of, even to the riches of a full assurance of understanding; and which is the end of their being written in the word, and made known in the ministry of it;

that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee; or, “return”^{f608} them to those that send to know what are the words of truth; that inquire concerning them with meekness and fear, and to whom a reason of the hope is to be given; as such are capable of, who have had the certainty of these words made known unto them, or who have been assured of the truth of them: and so Jarchi interprets it, to them that ask of thee instruction; as if it was written, as Lyra says it should, *Æyl awçl* , “to them that inquire of thee”. It may be rendered, “to them that send thee”^{f609}; to search for those things, and get the knowledge of them, in order to communicate them, which, when obtained, may be done. Unless God, Father, Son, and Spirit, should be intended, who are concerned in the sending of ministers to preach the Gospel to men; to whom they are to return an account of the words of truth, and of their dispensation of them to the souls of men; which when faithfully done, and success, they give up their account with joy, and not with grief.

Ver. 22. *Rob not the poor, because he [is] poor,* etc.] And cannot help himself; cannot go to law with him that has injured him, and defend his

own cause; which the other knowing, is the more emboldened to spoil and defraud him, which is an aggravation of his sin: or, “for he is poor”^{f610}; to rob any man is an evil and an injurious thing; but to rob the poor is cruel and barbarous; rather something should be given them, and not anything taken from them: or, “though he is poor”^{f611}; let not that be an inducement to injure him, but the contrary;

neither oppress the afflicted in the gate; or “the poor”^{f612}; the same as before, only a different word used: when he comes into a court of judicature, which was usually held in the gates of a city, (~~1890~~Ruth 4:1,2); and applies for redress of any grievance, do not crush him in the gate, or oppress him in judgment; nor wrest his cause, and do him wrong; but let him have justice done him, though poor. Some understand this of using the poor ill, when they come to their gates to beg; which sense is favoured by the Septuagint version; but the former is best. One might have expected, after such a preface or introduction as in the preceding verses, that something of more importance, something more spiritual and evangelical, would have followed: this shows the great regard the Lord has to the poor, and how much they are on his mind, and how near they lie to his heart; especially the poor of the flock, worried and spoiled by antichrist; (see ~~3810~~Zechariah 11:7,11).

Ver. 23. *For the Lord will plead their cause*, etc.] If counsellors at the bar will not, he will; if judges on the bench will not do them justice, he will; he will judge the poor of the people; he will plead their cause, and plead it thoroughly, till he has brought forth judgment unto victory: woe to the man against whom Jehovah pleads; happy the poor on whose side he is; for their Redeemer is mighty, the Lord of hosts is his name, (~~4970~~Psalm 72:4 ~~2814~~Jeremiah 50:34);

and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them; they could only spoil the poor of their goods, but the Lord can and will spoil and destroy the souls of the spoilers in hell: or, “spoil them that spoiled their soul” or “life”^{f613}; that is, who spoiled them of their goods, and took away that small pittance they had, which was their life or livelihood; they shall be spoiled themselves that spoil others; the same measure they have meted out shall be measured out to them again; God will destroy them that destroy the earth, even antichrist and his followers, the oppressors of Christ’s poor on earth, (~~6118~~Revelation 11:18).

Ver. 24. *Make no friendship with an angry man*, etc.] Do not associate with him; contract not a familiarity with him; make him not a companion; take him not into an intimacy, or use him as a particular friend and acquaintance: a man should be courteous, and carry it civilly to all men; but he should take care whom he admits as his bosom friend; he should be cautious in his choice of a familiar friend, and not receive any; and, among the rest, avoid an angry and passionate man, one who is much given to passion himself, and stirs it up in others; for there can be no lasting peace and pleasure in such a man's company and conversation;

and with a furious man thou shall not go: not take a walk with him, much less a journey; or shall not be frequently together. It may be rendered, “unto a man of wraths”, or of great wrath and “fury, thou shall not come”; not enter into his house, nor seek his company, and court his conversation, which rather should be shunned.

Ver. 25. *Lest thou learn his ways*, etc.] And be as wrathful and furious, as quarrelsome and contentious, as he is. Evil works and ways are soon learned; men are more ready to imitate what is evil than what is good: Joseph learned to swear in Pharaoh's court; and the Israelites learned the works of the Heathen, among whom they were mingled; “evil communications corrupt good manners”, (~~4653~~ 1 Corinthians 15:33). Many men, naturally mild and gentle, tenderhearted and compassionate, by being brought up among or conversing with bloodthirsty Papists, and imbibing their cruel notions and sentiments, have become fierce, and as furious persecutors of others;

and get a snare to thy soul; be drawn into sin, by speaking passionate words, or doing rash actions, which will bring on punishment, either in this world, or in that to come, or in both; which may affect the soul or life here; the taking of it away, or the eternal damnation of the soul hereafter.

Ver. 26. *Be not thou [one] of them that strike hands*, etc.] Or “among them”^{f614}, of the number of them, that do as they do, give their hand or their bond for others; he surety for them, as it is explained in the following clause; (see ~~2108~~ Proverbs 6:1 17:18);

[or] of them that are sureties for debts; contracted by others; that engage for the payment of them, in case the principal fails: and it is much if persons that keep indifferent company, angry and furious men, who are often in

broils and quarrels, and spend their time and substance in strife and contention, are not drawn into engagements of this kind.

Ver. 27. *If thou hast nothing to pay*, etc.] When the debtor this, and the creditor demands the debt of the surety: it is weakness in a man to be a surety for another, when he knows he is not able to pay the debt he is bound for, since it may be an injury to himself and family; but it is a piece of wickedness to engage for the payment of a debt, in case of insolvency, which he knows he is not able to answer; for this is deceiving and imposing upon the creditor; and therefore it is no wonder, being provoked by such ill usage, if he goes to extremity, as follows:

why should he take away thy bed from under thee? as in all likelihood he will, being irritated by such a conduct; and as he might, notwithstanding the law in (^{<1226>}Exodus 22:26,27); for that respects a pledge, and not a debt; and raiment pledged, the covering of a man when in bed, and not the bed itself; for even wife and children might be taken for debt, (^{<1241>}2 Kings 4:1 ^{<1025>}Matthew 18:25). This is said to deter from suretyship, especially in such circumstances; since a man may bring himself into such a condition as not to have a bed to lie on; yea, to have it taken from under him when upon it; and be turned out from house and home, naked and destitute.

Ver. 28. *Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.*] Or, “the ancient border” or “boundary”^{f615}; by which lands, estates, and inheritances, were marked, bounded, and distinguished; set by ancestors in agreement with their neighbours; which to remove was contrary to a law, and a curse is denounced upon those that did it, (^{<1594>}Deuteronomy 19:14 27:17); and was always reckoned a very heinous crime in early times; (see Gill on “^{<1242>}Job 24:2”). This was so sacred a thing among the Romans, that they had a deity which presided over those bounds, and had its name from them. Some apply this, in a political sense, to laws of long standing, and customs of long prescription; and others interpret it, in a theological sense, of doctrines and practices settled by the fathers of the church; which, if understood of Christ and his apostles only, will be allowed; but if of the ancient fathers of the church that followed them, it should not be received; since they were but fallible men, and guilty of many errors and mistakes, both in doctrine and practice.

Ver. 29. *Seest thou a man diligent in his business?* etc.] In the business of his calling, be it what it will, whether for himself or his master; constant in it, swift, ready, and expeditious at it; who industriously pursues it,

cheerfully attends it, makes quick dispatch of it; does it off of hand, at once, and is not slothful in it, nor weary of it; when you have observed and taken notice of such a man, which is not very common, you may, without a spirit of prophecy, foresee that such a man will rise in the world;

he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean [men], or “obscure persons”^{f616}; he shall not continue in the service of ignoble persons, or keep company with them; but he shall be taken into the service of princes and noble men, and be admitted into their presence, and receive favours from them; as Joseph, who was industrious and diligent in his business in Potiphar’s house, was in process of time advanced, and stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt, (~~0130~~Genesis 39:4 41:46). This may be spiritually applied. Every good man has a work or business to do in a religious way; some in a higher sphere, as officers of churches, ministers and deacons; the work of the one lies in reading, study, meditation, and prayer, in the ministration of the word and ordinances, and other duties of their once; and the business of the others in taking care of the poor, and the secular affairs of the churches; others in a lower way, and common to all Christians, which lies in the exercise of grace, and performance of all good works, relative to themselves, their families, and the church of God. Now ministers that are diligent in teaching and ruling; and deacons that do their office well; and private Christians, who are steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; are ready to every good work, heartily engaged in it, and constantly at it; shall not be company for the sons of darkness, unregenerate men, who are in the dark, and darkness itself; what communion has light with darkness, with works of darkness, they should be not workers of? or have any fellowship with the prince of darkness, from whose power they are delivered; but shall have society with the saints, who are made kings and priests unto God; shall be admitted into the presence of the King of kings now, and have communion with him; and shall stand before him at the great day with confidence, and not be ashamed; shall stand at his right hand, and shall be for ever with him. So the Jews^{f617} interpret this place, “he shall not stand before dark ones”, in hell; “he shall stand before kings”, in the garden of Eden, in paradise; that is, in heaven.

CHAPTER 23

Ver. 1. *When thou sittest to eat with a ruler*, etc.] Either a supreme ruler, a king, or a subordinate ruler, a nobleman, a judge, a civil magistrate, a person of honour, dignity, and authority; and to sit at table with such is sometimes allowed, and is always reckoned an honour; this particularly diligent and industrious persons are admitted to, who not only are brought to stand before kings and great persons, but to sit at table with them, and eat food with them. And now the wise man advises such how to behave themselves when this is the case:

consider diligently what [is] before thee; or, “considering consider”^{f618}: take special notice of the food and drink set upon the table, and consider well which may be most proper and safe to eat and drink of; for though a man may lawfully eat of whatsoever is set before him; every creature of God being good, if it be received with thanksgiving, and sanctified by the word of God and prayer; yet it is a piece of wisdom to make use of that which is most conducive to health, and less ensnaring; and to observe moderation in all, and not indulge to gluttony and drunkenness: and he should consider also who is before him, which sense the words wilt bear; the ruler that has invited him, and sits at the table with him, and take care that he says or does nothing that may give him offence; and also the noble personages that are guests with him, and behave towards them suitably to their rank and dignity; observe their words and conduct, and imitate the same; yea, even he should consider the servants and waiters that attend, lest, behaving in an indecent and disorderly manner, they should report it to his disadvantage to their ruler or others. But how much greater an honour is it to sit at table with the King of kings, and with his princes, and sup with him! when it becomes the saints, who have this honour, to consider what is set before them; the richest dainties, a feast of things, the body and blood of Christ, which should he spiritually discerned by faith; and not the elements of bread and wine only: likewise the persons before whom they are should be considered; Christ, who sits at his table, and the princes of his people with him; and therefore should not feed without fear, and in a disorderly and indecent manner, as the Corinthians are charged, but with all reverence and humility.

Ver. 2. *And put a knife to thy throat*, etc.] Refrain from too much talk at the table; give not too loose to thy tongue, but bridle it, considering in whose presence thou art; do not use too much freedom, either with the ruler or fellow guests; which, when persons have ate and drank well, they are too apt to do, and sometimes say things offensive to one or the other; it is good for a man to be upon his guard; (see ^{<218D>}Ecclesiastes 5:2). Or restrain thine appetite; deny thyself of some things agreeable, that would lead thee to what might be hurtful, at least if indulged to excess: put as it were a knife unto thine appetite, and mortify it; which is the same as cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye (^{<418D>}Matthew 5:29,30). Or while thou art at such a table, at such a sumptuous entertainment, consider thyself as in danger, as if thou hadst a knife at thy throat; and shouldst thou be too free with the food or liquor, it would be as it were cutting thine own throat;

if thou [be] a man given to appetite; there is then the more danger; and therefore such a person should be doubly on his guard, since he is in the way of temptation to that he is naturally inclined to. Or, “if thou art master of appetite”^{f619}: so the Targum,

“if thou art master of thy soul;”

if thou hast power over it, and the command of it, and canst restrain it with ease; to which agrees the Vulgate Latin version: but the former sense is more agreeable to the Hebrew idiom.

Ver. 3. *Be not desirous of his dainties*, etc.] His savoury food, which is very grateful to the taste, his rich provisions and royal dainties; do not lust after them, as the word^{f620} signifies, in an immoderate way, as the Israelites lusted after the fleshpots in Egypt: these may be lawfully desired, but not sinfully lusted after; and in feeding on them nature may be satisfied, and not the sensual lusts gratified in such a manner they crave, which would be criminal;

for they [are] deceitful meat; or, “bread of lies”^{f621}: through the pleasant and agreeable taste of them, they lead on to luxury and excess before a man is aware, and so deceive him; they promise him a great deal of pleasure, but, being too much indulged to, they produce sickness and nauseousness. Some think they are called so, from the intention and issue of them; being designed to draw out secrets, which men are very apt to divulge, when they have ate and drank freely. Some apply this to false

doctrines, which are framed sometimes in a very plausible manner, and deceive the simple; are bread of lies, lies in hypocrisy, and are very pernicious; such words eat, as do a canker, instead of yielding solid nourishment.

Ver. 4. *Labour not to be rich*, etc.] In an immoderate over anxious way and manner, to a weariness, as the word^{f622} signifies, and even as to gape for breath men ought to labour, that they may have wherewith to support themselves and families, and give to others and: if they can, lay up for their children; but then persons should not toil and weary themselves to heap up riches when they know not who shall gather them and much less make use of indirect and illicit methods to obtain them; resolving to be rich at any rate: rather men should labour for durable riches, lay up treasure in heaven, seek those things which are above, and labour to be accepted of God both here and hereafter; which only is in Christ. The Targum is,

“do not draw nigh to a rich man;”

and so the Syriac version; to which agree the Septuagint and Arabic versions;

cease from thine own wisdom; worldly wisdom in getting; riches, as if this was the highest point of wisdom; do not be always laying schemes, forming projects, inventing new things in order to get money; or do not depend upon thine own wisdom and understanding and expect to be rich by means thereof; for bread is not always to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, (²⁰⁹¹Ecclesiastes 9:11). The Targum is,

“but by thine understanding depart from him;”

the rich man; and to the same purpose the Syriac and Arabic versions.

Ver. 5. *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?* etc.] The Vulgate Latin version is,

“do not lift up thine eyes to riches which thou canst not have;”

riches no doubt are intended, and which may be said to be “not”; they are not the true riches, have only the shadow and appearance of riches; they are not lasting and durable; in a little time they will not be; they are perishing things, they have no substance or solidity in them; they are not satisfying; they do not make them happy; they are rather nonentities than realities; and therefore the eyes of the mind and the affections of the heart

should not be set on them: it may be rendered, “wilt thou cause thine eyes to fly upon that which is not?”^{f623} denoting the intenseness of the mind, and the eagerness of the affections, and with what rapidity and force they move towards them. The Targum is,

“if thou fixest thine eyes on him, he shall not appear to thee;”

meaning the rich man: and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Ben Melech makes mention of other senses very different; according to R. Judah, the word signifies darkness, “wilt thou make thine eyes dark?” two according to others, signifies light, “wilt thou make thine eyes to shine?” and, according to Jarchi, “wilt thou double?”, or shut thine eyes?

for [riches] certainly make themselves wings; or, “it in making makes itself wings”^{f624}; even that which is not, on which men cause their eyes to fly; no sooner are their eyes upon that, but that flies away from them like a bird with wings; (see ^{<391>}Hosea 9:11). Either men are taken from that, or that from them, and sometimes very swiftly and suddenly;

they fly away as an eagle towards heaven; the eagle flies very swiftly, none more swiftly; it flies towards heaven, out of sight, and out of reach, and out of call; so riches flee away to God, the original giver of them, from whence they came, and who is the sole disposer of them; they own him as the proprietor and distributor of them; and they flee to heaven as it were for fresh orders where they should be, and into whose hands they should come next; they flee away, so as not to be seen any more, and be recovered by those who have formerly enjoyed them.

Ver. 6. *Eat thou not the bread of [him that hath] an evil eye*, etc.] A sordid covetous man, that grudges every bit that is eaten, in opposition to a man of a good eye, or a bountiful one, that is liberal and generous, (^{<391>}Proverbs 22:9); if he invites to a meal, do not accept of it, sit not down at his table to eat with him:

neither desire thou his dainty meats; or savoury food, so as to lust after it; (see Gill on ^{<391>}Proverbs 23:3”).

Ver. 7. *For as he thinketh in his heart, so [is] he*, etc.] He is not the man his mouth speaks or declares him to be, but what his heart thinks; which is discovered by his looks and actions, and by which he is to be judged of, and not by his words;

eat and drink, saith he to thee, but his heart [is] not with thee; he bids you eat and drink, but he does not desire you should, at least but very sparingly; it is only a mere compliment, not a hearty welcome.

Ver. 8. *The morsel [which] thou hast eaten, shalt thou vomit up*, etc.] It shall turn in thy stomach, thou shall not be able to keep it, when thou understandest thou art not welcome; or thou wilt wish thou hadst never eaten a bit, or that thou couldest vomit up what thou hast; so disagreeable is the thought of being unwelcome, or when this appears to be the case;

and lose thy sweet words; expressed in thankfulness to the master of the feast, in praise of his food, in pleasantry with him, and the other guests at table; all which are repented of when a man finds he is not welcome.

Ver. 9. *Speak not in the ears of a fool*, etc.] For it is only beating the air, and speaking to the wind; it is casting pearls before swine, and that which is holy to dogs. By the “fool” is meant a wicked man, one abandoned to sin, and hardened in it; that scoffs at all admonitions and reproofs, that derides the word, and the preachers of it, and makes a mock at all good men, and everything they say; and therefore what is serious and sacred should not be said to them, since it only becomes the object of their banter and ridicule;

for he will despise the wisdom of thy words; not only the words of doctrine, reproof, and correction, but the “wisdom” of them; or let them be ever so wisely spoken; for if the wisdom of God and his words, the truths of the Gospel, are foolishness with such, and despised by them, then much more the wisdom even of the best of men, and the wisest things they say; yea, when they deliver the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, the Gospel of Christ, which therefore should be spoken among them that are perfect, (~~402~~1 Corinthians 1:24,25 2:6,7).

Ver. 10. *Remove not the old landmark*, etc.] (See Gill on “~~428~~Proverbs 22:28”);

and enter not into the fields of the fatherless; to carry off the increase of them, to reap their wheat, or mow their grass, or turn in cattle to eat it; or to encroach upon them, take in any part of them, or join the whole to their own; for if there is a woe to them that lay field to field, much more to them that enter into and take the fields of the fatherless, and join them to their own, (~~218~~Isaiah 5:8).

Ver. 11. *For their Redeemer [is] mighty*, etc.] As he must needs be, since the Lord of hosts is his name; who sympathizes with them, has mercy on them, is their father, and their friend; (see ^{<267B>}Jeremiah 50:34) (^{<284B>}Hosea 14:3 ^{<298F>}Psalm 68:5);

he shall plead their cause with thee; or “against thee”, as the Vulgate Latin version; and will certainly carry it for them, and against thee; for, when he undertakes a cause, he pleads it thoroughly.

Ver. 12. *Apply thine heart unto instruction*, etc.] To the instruction of parents, and to the instruction of ministers of the word; to the Scriptures, which are profitable to instruction in righteousness; to the instruction of wisdom, or to the Gospel of Christ, which instructs in things relating to him, and to salvation by him: or, “bring in thine heart to instruction”^{f625}; not only bring thy body to the place of instruction, the house of God, but bring thine heart thither also;

and thine ears to the words of knowledge; the doctrines of the Gospel, which are the means of the knowledge of God and Christ, and of all divine, spiritual, and heavenly tidings; and of a growth in the knowledge of them; and therefore should be diligently hearkened and cordially attended to.

Ver. 13. *Withhold not correction from the child*, etc.] When he has committed a fault, and correction is necessary; for to spare it is the ruin of the child, and no proof of true affection in the parent, but the reverse; (see ^{<213B>}Proverbs 13:24 19:18);

for, [if] thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die; if he be beaten moderately, there is no danger of his dying under the rod, or with the stripes given him; besides, such moderate and proper corrections may be a means of preserving him from such crimes as would bring him to a shameful and untimely death, and so he shall not die such a death; and by such means, through the grace of God, he may escape the second, or eternal death.

Ver. 14. *Thou shalt beat him with the rod*, etc.] Or, correct him with the stripes of the children of men, in a moderate and suitable manner, proportionable to the fault committed; and as he is able to bear it, both as to body and mind;

and shalt deliver his soul from hell; be a means of preventing those sins which would bring to hell and destruction; and of bringing to repentance

for those committed; and so of saving his soul, which should be the chief thing parents should have in view in chastising their children; the salvation of whose souls should be dear unto them, as it is to all truly gracious and thoughtful ones.

Ver. 15. *My son, if thine heart be wise*, etc.] To that which is good; so as from it to understand in a spiritual and experimental manner things divine and heavenly; he may be said to have a wise heart who knows in some measure what his heart is, the wickedness, the original depravity and corruption, of it; the plague of his own heart; the weakness and inability of it to do that which is good; the insufficiency of his own righteousness to justify him before God; the poverty of his spirit, and the folly of his mind: and who also is wise unto salvation; that knows the way of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and who applies to him for the same; builds on him, the foundation; prizes and values him; rejoices in him, and gives him the glory of his salvation; receives his doctrines, and obeys his commands; takes up and makes a profession of him on right principles, and walks wisely, becoming his character and profession;

my heart shall rejoice, even mine; it shall certainly and greatly rejoice; these words are spoken either by Solomon, who had a wise heart himself, and that either to his son, for whom he desired the same, nothing being more rejoicing to pious parents than to see their children becomes wise, especially in spiritual things; or else to those that attended on him for instruction, who was a preacher in Jerusalem; and what is the joy and crown of rejoicing of ministers but their converts, and to see them walking in the truth? (~~1~~1 Thessalonians 2:19,20 ~~2~~2 John 1:4) (~~3~~3 John 1:4); or these words are spoken by Wisdom, that is, by Christ, to his children; who rejoices when he has found them, or when they are converted, and become wise in a spiritual sense, and walk worthy, whereby Wisdom is justified of her children, (~~5,6~~5 Luke 15:5,6 ~~19~~19 Matthew 11:19); yea, there is joy in heaven, joy among the angels there, and even in the father of Christ, and of his people, (~~7,10,23,24~~7 Luke 15:7,10,23,24).

Ver. 16. *Yea, my reins shall rejoice*, etc.] Which is only another phrase expressive of the same thing, and confirming the greatness of joy on the above occasion; not only his heart rejoiced, which was affectionately concerned for his son, near which he lay, the desires of which were frequently drawn out for his good, but his reins also; the seat of the

afflictions rejoiced at it; showing how vehement, sincere, and hearty the joy was;

when thy lips speak right things; as they will, when the heart is wise; things agreeably to right reason, to the Scriptures of truth, the oracles of God; to the law and to the testimony; to the Gospel of Christ, and the doctrines of it; and such things as are savoury, pleasant, and profitable, and minister grace to the hearers. The Targum is,

“when my lips speak right things;”

(see ²¹⁸⁶Proverbs 8:6).

Ver. 17. *Let not thine heart envy sinners*, etc.] Their present prosperity and happiness, the pleasure, profit, and honour, they seem to enjoy; all which is but a shadow, fading had temporary; and yet good men are apt to envy it in their hearts, if they do not express it with their lips; and are ready to murmur and think it hard that they should be in straitened circumstances while the wicked are in flourishing ones; and inwardly fret and are uneasy at it, which they should not, (²⁵⁷⁰Psalm 37:1,7 73:2); or do not “emulate” or “imitate”^{f626} them, or do as they do, thinking thereby to enjoy the same prosperity and happiness; choose not their ways, nor desire to be with them, to have their company, or be ranked among them, (²¹⁸³Proverbs 3:31 24:1);

but [be thou] in the fear of the Lord all the day long; let the fear of God be always before thine eyes and in thine heart; be continually in the exercise of fear, which is attended with faith and trust in the Lord; with love and affection to him, and joy and delight in him; be constantly employed in the duties of religion, private and public, which the fear of God includes; and this will be a preservative from envying, murmuring, and fretting at the outward happiness of wicked men; and from joining with them in their evil ways. Aben Ezra, and who is followed by some others, render it, “but [emulate or imitate] the men that fear the Lord all the day long”^{f627}; be followers of them, and do as they do; let their constant piety and devotion stir up a holy emulation in thee to copy after them and exceed them; but the former sense is best.

Ver. 18. *For surely there is an end*, etc.] Both of the prosperity of the wicked, which is but for a short time; and of the afflictions of the righteous, which are but as it were for a moment; and therefore there is no reason to envy the one, nor to be fretful under the other; the end to a good man will

be peace and prosperity for ever: there is a “reward”^{f628}, as some render it here, for the righteous, though not of debt, but of grace; upon which account they have ground to expect much here and hereafter;

and thine expectation shall not be cut off; or “hope”^{f629}; as an hypocrite’s is; for the hope of a saint is well founded upon the person and righteousness of Christ, and is an anchor sure and steadfast; his expectation of grace, and every needful supply of it, while in this life, and of eternal glory and happiness in the world to come, shall not perish; but he shall enjoy what he is hoping, expecting, and waiting for.

Ver. 19. *Hear thou, my son, and be wise*, etc.] Hear the instruction of a father, of the word of Wisdom, of the ministers of the Gospel, which is the way to be wise unto salvation; faith comes by hearing; spiritual wisdom, and an increase of it; the Spirit of God, and his gifts and graces;

and guide thine heart in the way; in the way of the Lord, in the way of wisdom and understanding, in the way of truth and faith, in the way of religious worship, in the way of the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; in all which the heart should be guided and directed, or otherwise it will be of no avail.

Ver. 20. *Be not amongst winebibbers*, etc.] Who drink to excess, otherwise wine may be drank, provided moderation is used; but it is not good to be in company with, excessive drinkers of it, lost a habit of excessive drinking should be acquired;

among riotous eaters of flesh; flesh may be lawfully eaten, but not in a riotous manner, so as to indulge to gluttony and surfeiting; nor should such persons be kept company with that do so, lest their ways should be learned and imitated.

Ver. 21. *For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty*, etc.] They consuming their substance upon their bellies, in eating and drinking; (see ²¹¹⁷Proverbs 21:17);

and drowsiness shall clothe [a man] with rags; excessive eating and drinking brings drowsiness on men, unfits them for business, and makes them idle and slothful; and spending all on their bellies, they have nothing for their backs, and are clothed in rags; (see ²¹³³Proverbs 24:33,34).

Ver. 22. *Hearken unto thy father that begat thee*, etc.] And who has a true and hearty affection for thee, and whatever he says is for thy good and welfare, which he studies and has at heart; and who therefore also has an authority over thee, and what he enjoins ought to be strictly regarded; and, having lived longer in the world, must be thought to have a larger experience and knowledge of things, and therefore should be hearkened unto;

and despise not thy mother when she is old; despise not her counsels, instructions, and advice, though she is old; and because she is so, do not reject them as old wives' fables, or as the silly talk of an old woman, as young men are too apt to do.

Ver. 23. *Buy the truth, and sell [it] not*, etc.] Evangelical truth, the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation, which comes from the God of truth; has Christ, who is the truth, for the stem and substance of it; men are directed and led into it by the Spirit of truth; the whole matter of it is truth; truth, in opposition to the law, that was typical and shadowy; to the errors of false teachers, to everything that is fictitious, or another Gospel; and to that which is a lie, for no lie is of the truth: there are several particular doctrines of the Gospel which are so called; those which respect the knowledge of one God, and three Persons in the Godhead; the deity and sonship of Christ, his incarnation and Messiahship, salvation alone by him, a sinner's justification by his righteousness, and the resurrection of the dead; the whole of which is truth, and is an answer to Pilate's question, (~~John~~ John 18:38); and this men should "buy", not books only, as Aben Ezra interprets it, such as explain and confirm truth, though these should be bought; and especially the Bible, the Scriptures of truth; yet this does not reach the sense of the text: nor is it merely to be understood of persons supporting the Gospel ministry with their purses, by which means truth is preserved, propagated, and continued: no price is set upon it, as being above all; it should be bought or had at any rate, let the expense be what it will: "buying" it supposes a person to have some knowledge of it, of the excellency, usefulness, and importance of it; and shows that he sets a value upon it, and has a high esteem for it: it is to be understood of his using all means and taking great pains to acquire it; such as reading the word, meditating upon it, attending on the public ministry, and fervent and frequent prayer for it, and a greater degree of knowledge of it; yea, it signifies a person's parting with everything for it that is required; as with his former errors he has been brought up in, or has imbibed; with his good

name and reputation, being willing to be accounted a fool or a madman, and an enthusiast, or anything for the sake of it; and even with life itself, when called for; and such a man will strive and contend for it, stand fast in it, and hold it fast, and not let it go, which is meant by “selling” it; truth is not to be sold upon any account, or for any thing whatever; it is not to be slighted and neglected; it should not be parted with neither for the riches, and honours, and pleasures of this life, nor for the sake of a good name among men, nor for the sake of peace, nor for the avoiding of persecution; it should he abode by, and not departed from, though the greater number is against it, and they the riots, the wise, and learned; and though it may be traduced as novel, irrational, and licentious, and be attended with affliction;

[also] wisdom, and instruction, and understanding; that is, buy these also, and sell them no; “wisdom” is to be prized above everything; it is the principal thing, and should be got; all means should he used to obtain it; it may be bought without money; it should be asked of God, who gives it liberally, and, being had, should be held fast: the “instruction” the Scriptures give, the instruction of the Gospel, the instruction of Wisdom, should be valued above gold and silver, and diligently sought after; should be laid fast hold on and not parted with: “understanding” of divine and spiritual things is to be gotten; happy is the man that gets it; and above all gettings this should be got, and all means made rise of to improve and increase it. The Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions, connect these with the word sell only, thus, “buy the truth, and sell not wisdom, and instruction, and understanding”; but as buying and selling both refer to truth, so likewise to these also. The whole verse is wanting in the Septuagint and Arabic versions.

Ver. 24. *The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice*, etc.] Or “in rejoicing shall rejoice”^{f630}, in his son; not that he is rich, but righteous, truly righteous, internally and externally; having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and righteousness and true holiness wrought in him, and so lives soberly, righteously, and godly: this must be understood of a father who is himself righteous; for otherwise wicked men, if their sons do but thrive in the world, they are unconcerned about their character as righteous, or their state and condition God-ward;

and he that begetteth a wise [child] shall have joy of him; especially if he is wise in the best things; if he is wise unto salvation; he may be wise and knowing in things natural, have a good share of wit and sense, and be wise

in worldly things, which may yield a pleasure to a natural man his parent; but, if he is a good man, he will have greater joy of his son if he is wise in the first sense. The mother and grandmother of Timothy had no doubt great joy of him, who, from a child, knew the holy Scriptures; and so had the elect lady of her children, who were walking in the truth; and so has our heavenly Father of his children, who are righteous and wise through his grace.

Ver. 25. *Thy father and thy mother shall be glad*, etc.] That, is when thou art righteous and wise; (see ^{<3000>}Proverbs 10:1); or “let thy father and thy mother be glad”^{f631}; do everything that may make their hearts glad, and their lives easy and comfortable in their old age; by ministering to their necessities, if in any; by treading in their steps, and following their examples; by living soberly and righteously, and behaving wisely; by not only honouring them, but by seeking the honour and glory of God; showing a regard to religion, and supporting it to the utmost of their power; these are things which make the hearts of pious parents glad;

and she that bare thee shall rejoice; thy mother particularly, who bore and brought thee forth with so much pain, and brought thee up with so much care and trouble, will think it an to much recompence for all, if thou art truly wise and religious. Some accommodate this to God our heavenly Father, and to the church, the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all.

Ver. 26. *My son, give me thine heart*, etc.] These words are not the words of Solomon to his son, for a greater than Solomon is here; besides, the claim and possession of the heart do not belong to a creature, but to God; but they are the words of Wisdom, or Christ, to everyone of his sons, the children the Father has given him in covenant; who are adopted through him, regenerated by his Spirit and grace, begotten by his word and ministers as instruments, and born and brought up in his church, and to whom he stands in the relation of the everlasting Father. The heart of a wicked man is little worth, and not worth having; Satan has the possession of it, and fills it, and influences and draws it at his pleasure; the world is set in it, and there is no room for any other; sensual lusts and pleasures, whoredom, wine, and new wine, take away the heart, (^{<3041>}Hosea 4:11); and it is to those this exhortation is opposed, as appears from the following verses; and the sense is, give not thine heart to women, nor to wine, but to me. Christ should have the hearts and affections of his people, and he only; he is to be loved with the whole heart, sincerely, and above all things else;

and it is a good man's heart he desires; a broken and a contrite heart is not despised by him, he binds it up; a heart purified by faith in his blood, a new heart and a new spirit, in which his laws are put and written; a heart to know him, fear him, love him, and believe in him: and as he requites the heart in the exercise of every grace, as faith, fear, and love; so in the performance of, every duty, which, without the heart, is of no avail; as in prayer, singing of praise, and hearing the word, and other religious services. And it is but reasonable service, that Christ should have the hearts of his children, since he stands in such near relations to them; as father, husband, friend, and brother; is all in all unto them; is so lovely a person himself, and has so loved them, and given himself, his life, his blood, his all, for them;

and let thine eyes observe my ways; the ways which Wisdom, or Christ, took in eternity and time, in order to bring about the salvation of his people; his steps in the covenant of grace, as their surety; his coming down from heaven to earth, to do the will of his Father; his going away from hence, by submitting to the accursed death of the cross, thereby making peace and reconciliation for sin; his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, where he ever lives to intercede for us; the various methods of his grace, in calling and visiting his people, supplying their wants, protecting their persons, and preserving them safe to his kingdom and glory: these should be observed, with attention and wonder, to the encouragement of faith, and for the magnifying of the riches of grace: also the ways which he prescribes and directs his children to walk in; as himself, who is the way to the Father, the way of life and salvation; the way of faith in him, the way of truth concerning hath; the way of holiness and righteousness he leads in; the ways of his commandments; the ways in which he himself walked; all which should be observed by the enlightened eyes of the understanding, and be imitated, and copied after, and walked in; respect should be had unto them all; they should be observed and kept, as they are directed to, and in faith and love, without depending on them. Some render the words, "let thine eyes run through my ways"^{f632}: take a thorough and exact view of them. There is a letter transposed in the word rendered "observe", which occasions a different reading; "as is a man's heart, so are his eyes"; if his heart is to Christ, his eyes will be in his ways; and, where Christ's ways are not observed, the heart is not given to him.

Ver. 27. *For a whore [is] a deep ditch*, etc.] Or, "as a deep ditch", so Aben Ezra; to which she may be compared for the filthiness of her

whoredoms, and for her insatiable lust, as well as for her being never satisfied with what she receives from her lovers. Plautus compares^{f633} her to the sea, which devours whatever you give, and yet nothing appears; and another^{f634} calls a whore Charybdis, from her swallowing up and devouring all a man has. She is as a ditch that has no bottom, into which those that fall are ever sinking deeper and deeper, till they get into the bottomless pit; for there is seldom any recovery from this dreadful evil;

and a strange woman [is] a narrow pit; or “well”^{f635}; into which when men fall, they bruise themselves in a terrible manner, by beating from side to side; and out of which they cannot extricate themselves; at least not easily, but with great difficulty, if ever. This may very well be applied to the whore of Rome, and the filthiness of her fornications; and the dreadful state of those who are drawn in to commit fornication with her.

Ver. 28. *She also lieth in wait as [for] a prey*, etc.] At the door of her house, in the corner of the streets, in the dark of the night; laying her snares, and spreading her nets, for unwary persons, to make a prey of their virtue and of their money. Or, “as [a man of] prey”^{f636}; a thief and robber, so Gersom; thus she watches and takes all opportunities to seize on persons, and rob them of their substance, health, and credit; or rather “as [a beast of] prey”; ravenous, devouring, and insatiable; so the Targum,

“as a beast ravening, she lies in wait with her eyes;”

and increaseth the transgressors among men; there is none that occasions more sin, or makes more sinners, than a whorish woman; swearing, lying, drunkenness, thieving, stealing, housebreaking, robbing on the highway, etc. are the sins she leads into. Or, “increaseth treacherous”^{f637} persons; to God, to their king, to their wives, to their master’s; and all that they may consume, what they can get by perfidious practices, upon them, or,

“perfidious persons among men, she adds “to herself”^{f638},”

she gets a parcel of abandoned wretches about her, whom she employs as her panders for her lust, or as bullies to spoil her gallants of their substance, or murder them for the sake of it.

Ver. 29. *Who hath woe?* etc.] In this world and in the other, in body and soul; diseases of body, distress of mind, waste of substance, and all manner of evils and calamities; if any man has these, the drunkard has: from

whoredom, the Holy Ghost proceeds to drunkenness, which generally go together; and dissuades from it, by observing the mischiefs that come by it;

who hath sorrow? through pains of body, with the headache, etc. or through the agonies of the mind, and tortures of conscience, for sin committed; or through poverty and want, so Aben Ezra derives the word from one that signifies “poor”; and so it may be rendered, “who hath poverty”^{f639}? the drunkard; (see ~~3123~~ Proverbs 23:21);

who hath contentions? quarrels and lawsuits, which often come of drunken bouts;

who hath babbling? or “loquacity”^{f640}? which drunkards are subject to; much vain babbling, foolish talk, scurrilous language, scoffs, jeers, especially at religion and religious men; and sometimes such men are full of talk about religion itself, and make great pretensions to it, and the knowledge of it, in their cups, when out of them they think and talk nothing about it;

who hath wounds without cause? from words, oftentimes, drunkards go to blows upon the most frivolous accounts; fight with one another for no reason at all, and get themselves beaten and bruised for nothing;

who hath redness of eyes? the drunkard has, inflamed with wine or strong drink; which, drank frequently and to excess, is the cause of sore eyes, as well as of weakening the sight; or, however, leaves a redness there, and in other parts of the face, whereby those sons of Bacchus may be known: so it is observed^{f641} of Vitellius the emperor, that his face was commonly red through drunkenness. Hillerus renders it, “blackness of eyes”; such as comes from blows received; taking the word to be of the same signification with the Arabic word **l j k**, which so signifies: this agrees with the preceding clause; and is countenanced by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Ver. 30. *They that tarry long at the wine*, etc.] At drinking it. Do not care to stir from it when at it; spend whole days and nights in it, and are overcome by it, and so bring upon them all the above evils;

they that go to seek mixed wine, not wine mixed with water, as used commonly by temperate people in hot countries; but either mixed with spices, to make it more palatable, or with different sorts of wine, some very strong, and more heady and intoxicating; or mere wine meant; wine

“poured out”, as the word^{f642} signifies, where there is plenty of it; and such as are given to wine go and seek out such places, and where the best is to be had. So the Targum,

“they go and seek the house of mixture, or mixed wine;”

or, as the Syriac version,

“the house of feasting;”

and so the Arabic:

“where there are junketing and drinking bouts,”

as the Septuagint.

Ver. 31. *Look not thou upon the wine when it is red*, etc.] Or, “because it is red”^{f643}; or shows itself red. Which was the only wine used in the land of Canaan, or, however, the most esteemed of, and that most of art which had the best colour; when it had a good, bright, red colour, or sparkled, and looked bright and beautiful, so the word signifies; and then it should not be looked upon: not that it is unlawful to look upon the colour of wine, and thereby judge of its goodness; but it should not be looked upon with a greedy eye, so as vehemently to desire it, which will lead to an intemperate use of it; just as looking upon a woman, so as to lust after her, is forbidden, (~~4153~~ Matthew 5:28);

when it giveth his colour in the cup: or, its eye in the cup^{f644}; such a bright, brisk, and beautiful colour, as is like a bright and sparkling eye. Here is a various reading; it is written in the text, “in the purse”^{f645}; it is read in the margin, “in the cup”; and Jarchi’s note takes in both,

“he that drinks wine sets his eye on the cup; and the vintner sets his on his purse;”

[when] it moveth itself aright; sparkles in the glass, or goes down the throat pleasantly; or rather looks well to the eye, and appears right and good, and promises a great deal of satisfaction and delight.

Ver. 32. *At the last it biteth like a serpent*, etc.] Though it goes down sweetly, yet it leaves a sting behind it, intemperately drunk; a nausea in the stomach, a stink in the breath, pains and giddiness in the head, weakness in the eyes, trembling in the members of the body, palsy, gout, and other distempers, very painful and grievous to be bore; and, what is worse, if the

conscience is awakened, sharp and cutting reflections there; and, without true repentance, torments intolerable in the world to come;

and stingeth like an adder; or “spreads”^{f646}, or separates and scatters; that is, its poison. So the Vulgate Latin version, “diffuseth poisons as a basilisk”, or “cockatrice”; the Targum and Syriac version,

“as a serpent which flies;”

it signifies the same as before.

Ver. 33. *Thine eyes shall behold strange women*, etc.] Being inflamed with wine, shall look upon women, other men’s wives, and lust after them; or harlots, whom seeking after or meeting with, when in their cups, are drawn into their embraces; excess of wine leads to whoredom^{f647}. So Aben Ezra supplies the word “women”, and Jarchi interprets it to this sense; but the Targum renders it, “strange things”; and so many others: a drunken man, through the lunges and vapours that ascend into his brain, fancies he sees strange sights; he sees things double; imagines that he sees trees walk, and many such like absurd and monstrous things;

and thine heart shall utter perverse things; or the mouth, from the abundance of the heart, and imagination of it, shall utter things contrary to sense and reason, contrary to truth and righteousness, contrary to chastity and good manners, contrary to their own honour and credit, contrary to God and men; the mouth then utters all that is in the heart, which it at other times conceals. It may have a particular respect to the unchaste, filthy, and obscene words, uttered to strange women, into whose company men fall when in liquor.

Ver. 34. *Yea, thou shall be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea*, etc.] Not in the open sea, and the waves of it, there fluctuating and tossed about; nor in an island encompassed by sea; but in a ship at sea, a drunken man reels and tumbles about, just as a ship does at sea; hence the motions and agitations of it, and of the men in it, are compared to the reeling and staggering of a drunken man, (^{Q147B}Psalm 107:26,27);

or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast: where the motion is the greatest. Or all this may be expressive of the dangers which a drunkard is exposed unto, and of his stupidity and insensibility; for though he is in as great danger as one in the circumstances described, in a storm at sea, yet is not sensible of it; which agrees with what follows.

Ver. 35. *They have stricken me, [shalt thou say, and] I was not sick,* etc.] Or “grieved not”^{f648}; or was not wounded or skin broken^{f649}; see (~~248B~~ Jeremiah 5:3). The drunken man is here represented as saying, that though his companions, with whom he quarrelled and fought in his drunken frolics, beat him very much, yet he was not sensible of the pain and smart; and it had left no sickness nor disorder upon him; he did not find himself much the worse for it;

they have beaten me; as with hammers^{f650}; battered and bruised him terribly, laying very hard and heavy strokes upon him;

[and] I felt [it] not; or “knew it not”^{f651}; did not perceive it, was not sensible of it, when the blows were given, or who gave them; and thus feeling no more, and coming off so well, as he thinks, he is so far from being reclaimed from this vice, that he is more strengthened in it, and desirous of it;

when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again: that is, the wine and his boon companions, though he has been so used. So the Vulgate Latin version, “when shall I awake, and again find wines?” being heavy with sleep through intemperance, and yet thirsty, is desirous of shaking off his sleep, that he may get to drinking again, and “add drunkenness to thirst”, (~~192B~~ Deuteronomy 29:19); so the Septuagint version,

“when will it be morning, that going I may seek with whom I may meet?”

CHAPTER 24

Ver. 1. *Be not thou envious against evil men*, etc.] Or, “men of evil”^{f652}. Such who are addicted to evil, and given up to it, whose principles and practices are bad; such as are before described in the preceding chapter; gluttons and drunkards, men given to women and wine: envy not their present prosperity, or seeming pleasure they have in the gratification of their sensual appetites; since woe and sorrow, wounds and strife, now attend them, and poverty and want will follow them; as well as everlasting ruin and destruction will be their portion hereafter; (see Gill on ~~“<A1B7>Proverbs 23:17”~~); and compare with this (~~“<A1B2>Proverbs 24:21,27,29,32~~);

neither desire to be with them; to be in their company; to have any conversation and fellowship with them, which is very infectious, dangerous, and pernicious; nor even to be in the same state, condition, and circumstances they are in; much less to do as they do, and imitate them in their sinful courses; as you would not choose to be with them in hell hereafter, do not desire to be with them here.

Ver. 2. *For their heart studieth destruction*, etc.] To others; to good men, that separate from them, and reprove them, or are in their way; or any ways hinder them in the prosecution of their wicked designs; as Haman’s heart studied the destruction of the Jews: or their hearts study to draw men into their destructive methods of living, and therefore should be shunned and avoided. Moreover, their hearts study destruction to themselves; they study what they shall eat and drink, which they pursue to intemperance; and how they shall compass their lewd designs, and which issue in their ruin; destruction and misery are in all the ways they devise and walk in;

and their lips talk of mischief; which they study in their hearts against others; as are their hearts, so are their lips; out of the abundance of the wickedness of their hearts their mouths speak mischievous things; and which, though they design for others, oftentimes fall upon themselves.

Ver. 3. *Through wisdom is a house builded*, etc.] A family is built up, furnished and supplied with the necessaries and conveniences of life, and brought into flourishing and prosperous circumstances, by wise and prudent management, by diligence and industry, through the blessing of

God upon them, without taking such methods as evil men do. The house of God, the church of the living God, is built by Wisdom, that is, by Christ; on a good foundation, a rock, upon himself, against which the gates of hell can never prevail; (see ^{<100E>}Proverbs 9:1). Every good man's house, himself, his soul, and the eternal salvation of it, are built on the same; and he is a wise man that builds his house through wisdom; that builds on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the one and only foundation which God has laid, which is Jesus Christ;

and by understanding it is established; the prosperity of a man's family is continued and secured by his prudent conduct. The church of God is established by Christ, who is understanding as well as wisdom; (see ^{<1084>}Proverbs 8:14 ^{<107E>}Psalm 87:5); and every true believer is established in Christ, and in the faith of him; and that as he has more and more an understanding of him and of divine things.

Ver. 4. *And by knowledge shalt the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*] That are both of worth, value, and usefulness, and for ornament and delight; the more private and retired parts of a man's dwelling house, as well as his shops, warehouses, barns, and granaries, shall be filled with all kind of valuable substance, through his knowledge in improving trade or husbandry, in which he is concerned. This may be understood spiritually, of the fulness which the church has from Christ, and of those unsearchable riches of his she receives from him; and of those treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which the chambers of the soul of a believer are filled with by him; and of all the riches put into them, which are both precious and pleasant; such as precious promises, pleasant doctrines, the valuable truths of the Gospel, and blessings of grace.

Ver. 5. *A wise man [is] strong,* etc.] He can do that sometimes by his wisdom, and which requires strength and courage too, which another cannot do by his strength; (see ^{<1072>}Proverbs 21:22 ^{<1095>}Ecclesiastes 9:15,16). This may be understood of one that is spiritually wise, wise unto salvation, wise for another world, is made to know true wisdom in the hidden part. The Stoic philosophers say much of their wise man; that he is happy, and rich, and mighty, and even a king; all which may be said more truly of a good man; he is strong, not absolutely, but comparatively, in comparison of what he himself was; and wicked men are without strength, and do not seek for any elsewhere; nor do they, nor can they do, that which is spiritually good, and are ignorant of their weakness: but so is not

a wise man; he has some spiritual strength; he seeks to Christ for more, and, through Christ strengthening him, does all things; and is sensible of his own weakness, and finds that when he is weak he is strong: one eminently wise is strong, in comparison of less knowing and more feeble saints; some are children in knowledge, weak in faith and in conduct, more easily drawn into sin and temptation than others; and, in comparison of these, some are strong, who are to bear with and support the weak, and restore them. A wise man is strong, not in and of himself; he cannot think a good thought, nor do a good action, nor preserve himself from sin and Satan; but he is strong in Christ, and in the power of his might, and in his grace; and, through spiritual strength communicated to him, his heart is strengthened, and the work of grace in his heart; he is strengthened to exercise grace more strongly, to perform the duties of religion, to bear the cross of Christ, to withstand temptations, and to oppose his own corruptions. It may be rendered, “a wise man [is] in strength”^{f653}; he is in Christ the strong hold, whither, as a prisoner of hope, he has fled and turned into; he is in the strong tower, into which he has run and is safe; he is surrounded with the might and power of God on all sides, by which he is kept;

yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength; a spiritual man, a man endued with spiritual knowledge, with the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him; as he has a degree of spiritual strength, he increases therein; he grows stronger and stronger, he goes from strength to strength; the more he knows of Christ, the more strongly he trusts in him and loves him, and the more able he is to resist Satan’s temptations; and is a better match for false teachers who deceive the hearts of the simple: spiritual strength is increased by means of the word of God, by the promises of the Gospel, and by the ordinances of it.

Ver. 6. *For by wise counsel thou shall make thy war*, etc.] Counsel, as well as strength, is necessary for war: kings and states, before they enter on a war, should not only well consider the justness of their cause, but should consult whether they have a sufficiency of men and money to carry it on; and should concert the wisest methods to attack the enemy, or defend themselves; and, above all, should ask counsel of God; (see ^{<12831>}2 Kings 18:20 ^{<2161>}Luke 14:31,32). And this is true of our spiritual warfare with sin, Satan, the world, and false teachers; which requires not only strength to wage war with them, but wise counsel, that we may be able to understand and guard against their cunning, wiles, and stratagems: and this is

principally to be asked of God, who is wonderful in counsel; and of good and experienced men, skilled in those matters;

and in the multitude of counsellors [there is] safety; to take the advice of wise counsellors, and many of them, even among men, is safe for princes and states, in the above case and in all others; and especially to ask and take counsel of God, who gives wisdom liberally to them that ask it; and of Christ, the wonderful Counsellor; and from the Scriptures, whom David made his counsellors; and from old experienced Christians, and ministers of the word, with whom are wisdom, counsel, and understanding; (see Gill on ^{<4014>}Proverbs 11:14”).

Ver. 7. *Wisdom [is] too high for a fool*, etc.] It is out of his reach, he cannot attain it; natural wisdom, or the knowledge of many things in nature; at least it seems so to himself, and therefore will not take any pains, or make use of any means, to obtain it; as the knowledge of human laws; of medicine, of philosophy, of languages, or of any of the liberal arts and sciences; or he has not really a capacity for it. This is more especially true of spiritual wisdom, or of the knowledge of divine things in a spiritual way; or of the things Of the Spirit of God, which a natural man cannot know, because they are spiritually discerned; it is God only makes men to know this kind of wisdom in the hidden part, (^{<4024>}1 Corinthians 2:14 ^{<4506>}Psalm 51:6); for as a “fool” here denotes a wicked man, let his natural parts be what they will; so wisdom spiritual knowledge, and experience of divine things, which is too high for an unregenerate man to reach; see a like phrase in (^{<4006>}Psalm 139:6);

he openeth not his mouth in the gate; he is not qualified far it; and if he has any knowledge of himself, he will not venture to speak in a public assembly, in the house of parliament, in a court of judicature, or in the company of men of knowledge and sense; and indeed it is his highest wisdom to keep silence, and not betray his ignorance: and so with regard to spiritual things; a man that wisdom is too high for, and he has no share of it, shall not or ought not to open his mouth where Wisdom cries; even in the gates of the cities, or in the public assemblies of the saints, (^{<4002>}Proverbs 1:21 8:3).

Ver. 8. *He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person*] To do evil is natural to men, all are prone to it; being conceived and born in sin, and, from the womb, more or less commit it: but for a man to sit down and contrive evil, as some men are inventors of evil things; contrive new

sins, or at least new methods of sinning, such as new oaths, new games, new ways of tricking and deceiving men; and are always studying and devising ways and means of committing sin, and doing that which is evil in the sight of God and men. Such a man, with great propriety, may be called, and will be called by those that know him, a mischievous man, a very pernicious one, and to be shunned and avoided as such; men will reckon him and call him a “master” or “author”^{f654} of evil devices”, as it may be rendered; a name agreeable to his character.

Ver. 9. *The thoughts of foolishness [is] sin*, etc.] The thought of sin is sin^{f655}, before it comes into action; the motions of sin in the mind, the workings of corrupt nature in the heart, the sinful desires of the flesh and of the mind: these are forbidden and condemned by the law of God as sin, which says, “Thou shall not covet”, (~~(1217)~~ Exodus 20:17), and stand in need of pardoning grace and mercy; (see ~~(8175)~~ Romans 7:5,7 ~~(482)~~ Acts 8:22). Or, “the thoughts of a foolish man are sin”^{f656}; that is, of a wicked man; in all whose thoughts God is not, but sin is; the imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil, and that continually; he thinks of nothing else but sin, (~~(1015)~~ Genesis 6:5);

and the scorner [is] an abomination to men; who not only thinks ill of divine things, and despises them in his heart, which is only known to God; but scoffs at them with his lips, makes a jest of all that is good, derides religion and religious men; and to such he is an abomination: and indeed one that is proud and haughty, scorner is his name, and that deals in proud wrath, and scorns all around him, in whatsoever company he comes, and that ridicules every person, and every thing that is said in conversation, is usually hated and abhorred by all sorts of men.

Ver. 10. *[If] thou faint in the day of adversity*, etc.] When under bodily afflictions, stripping providences, reduced to great straits and wants; or under the violent persecutions of men, which is sometimes the case of the people of God; whose times are in his hands, times of adversity, as well as prosperity; and which are appointed by him, when they shall come, and how long they shall last; which is but for a short time, it is but a “day”, and yet they are apt to “faint” under them, through the number and continuance of their afflictions; and especially when they apprehend them to be in wrath; when they have a sense of their sins at such a time, and no view of pardon; when they are under the hidings of God’s face, their prayers do not seem to be heard, and salvation and deliverance do not come so soon as

they expected; which, notwithstanding, shows the truth of what is next observed;

thy strength [is] small; such who are truly gracious are not indeed at such times wholly without strength; they are in some measure helped to bear up; but yet their sinkings and faintings show that they have but little strength: they have some faith that does not entirely fail, Christ praying for it; yet they are but of little faith; they have but a small degree of Christian fortitude and courage; there is a want of manliness in them; they act the part of children and babes in Christ; they do not quit themselves like men, and much less endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ, as they should; they are, Ephraim like, without a heart, a courageous one, (^{<300>}Hosea 7:1). Some think the words have reference to what goes before, and the sense to be this, “if thou art remiss”,^{f657}; that is, if thou art careless and negligent in time of health and prosperity, in getting wisdom, as thinking it too high for thee, (^{<301>}Proverbs 24:7); “in the day of adversity thy strength [will be] small”; thou wilt not have that to support thee which otherwise thou wouldest have had. Aben Ezra connects the sense with the following, “if thou art remiss”, in helping and delivering thy friend in affliction, (^{<302>}Proverbs 24:11,12); “in the day of adversity”, or “of straitness, thy strength shall be strait”; thou shalt be left in thy distress and difficulties, and have none to help thee.

Ver. 11. *If thou forbear to deliver [them that are] drawn unto death*, etc.] Or “taken for or unto death”^{f658}, in a violent way; who are taken by thieves and robbers, and used in a barbarous manner, as the man in the parable, whom the priest and Levite took no notice of, and was helped by the good Samaritan; or who are unjustly sentenced and appointed to death by the civil magistrate; if any know their innocency, it becomes them to do all they can to save their lives, by bearing a testimony for them; for “a true witness delivereth souls”, (^{<303>}Proverbs 14:25); or by interceding for them, and giving counsel and advice concerning them, or by any lawful way they can; as Reuben delivered Joseph, Jonathan interceded for David, and Ahikam and Ebedmelech for Jeremiah. Life is valuable, and all means should be taken to save it, and to prevent the shedding of innocent blood; and a man should not forbear or spare any cost, or pains, or time, to such service: likewise such as are drawn into snares and temptations, into immorality or heresy, which tend to the ruin of the souls of men, and bring them to eternal death; all proper, methods should be taken to restore such persons, to recover them out of the snare of the devil, which is saving souls

from death, and covering a multitude of sins; (see ^{^{S125} 2 Timothy 2:25,26) (~~^{S159}~~ James 5:19,20);}

and [those that are] ready to be slain; or ^{f659} “bending to slaughter”; are within a little of being executed, or put to death, upon a false accusation; for about others that suffer righteously there need not be that concern here pressed, or whose works and ways incline to destruction and lead to it, of which they seem not very far off.

Ver. 12. *If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not*, etc.] The danger the person was in; or the innocency of his cause; or what method to take to deliver him; or that it was in our power to do anything for him; so the Vulgate Latin version, “if thou sayest, strength is not sufficient”: or “we knew him not”^{f660}, who he was or what he was; had no knowledge of him, or acquaintance with him, and so did not think ourselves under any obligation to regard his case; such excuses will not do;

doth not he that pondereth the heart consider [it]? he that searches the heart and tries it, and weighs every thought of it, and excuse it makes, considers and understands whether it is a mere excuse or not; though such excuses may appear plausible to men, yet to God that knows the heart they are of no avail; for he knows it to be a mere shift, and that it was unwillingness to help the distressed, and a neglect of their case; and that all that is said on their own behalf is a vain pretence;

and he that keepeth thy soul, doth [not] he know [it]? he that upholds it in life, and whose visitation preserves it, and therefore should be careful of the life of another; and if not, may justly fear the Lord will withdraw his care and preservation of them; he knows perfectly well what regard a man has to the welfare of another, or to the preservation of another man’s life when in danger; and whether what he says on his own behalf is well founded: or “he that observeth thy soul”^{f661}; all the inward motions of it, the thoughts, affections, purposes, and inclinations; he knows whether what is said is true or not;

and shall [not] he render to [every] man according to his works? and behave towards him according to the law of retaliation; the same measure he measures to others, he will measure to him again; and who having shown no mercy in saving the lives of others, when he could have done it, shall have judgment executed on him without mercy, when he is in distress.

Ver. 13. *My son, eat thou honey, because [it is] good,* etc.] It is good for food; there was plenty of it in Palestine, and it was eaten for food, not only by children, but grown persons; and was very nourishing, strengthening, and refreshing to them, as Samson, Jonathan, John the Baptist, and others; and is good for medicine, is healthful and salutary, and useful in many diseases: it is said^{f662} to conduce much to prolong life and preserve from diseases; it has been observed that those who have much used it have lived to a great age;

and the honeycomb, [which is] sweet to thy taste; because it is so, as all honey is, and especially that which is immediately squeezed or drops from the honeycomb; this is said not so much on account of honey, and the eating of that, as for what follows concerning the knowledge of wisdom, which is comparable to it for pleasure and profit; see (^{<1062>}Proverbs 16:24 ^{<0911>}Psalm 19:11 119:103)^{f663}.

Ver. 14. *So [shall] the knowledge of wisdom [be] unto thy soul,* etc.] Or let it be taken in as greedily and with as good an appetite; as pleasant, useful, delightful, and profitable; even the knowledge of Christ, the Wisdom of God, which is preferable to all things else, and more desirable than the most pleasant and profitable things in the world; and of the Gospel of Christ, the wisdom of God in a mystery, than which nothing is more sweet and comfortable to a truly gracious soul; it is like Ezekiel's roll, which was in his mouth as honey for sweetness, (^{<1078>}Ezekiel 3:3);

when thou hast found [it], then there shall be a reward; for though there may be some difficulty and trouble to attain it, in the use of means, by reading, bearing, prayer, and meditation, yet, being enjoyed, it carries its own reward with it; a man is abundantly recompensed for all his pains in the pursuit of it, by the pleasure and profit it yields him now and hereafter; for it is the beginning of life eternal, and will issue in it, (^{<1078>}John 17:3); (see ^{<1018>}Proverbs 2:3-5 3:13);

and thy expectation shall not be cut off; or "hope"^{f664}; as the hope of the hypocrite will, (^{<1084>}Job 8:14), the hope of eternal life, as founded on Christ and his righteousness, where such that know Wisdom place their hope; and this hope will not make them ashamed; they will not be disappointed, their expectation shall not perish, they will have what they are waiting and hoping for, and what is promised unto them, (see Gill on "^{<1038>}Proverbs 23:18"). The Targum is,

“which if thou findest, the last shall come better than the first, and thy hope shall not be consumed.”

Ver. 15. *Lay not wait, O wicked [man], against the dwelling of the righteous*, etc.] The church of God, which is the righteous man’s dwelling place, and where he desires and delights to dwell; or his own dwelling house; it may be rendered, “at the dwelling of the righteous”^{f665}; lay not wait at his door to observe who goes in and out, and what is done there; and to watch for his halting, and take notice of his infirmities, slips, and falls, and improve them to his disadvantage; and so the Vulgate Latin version, “and lay not wait and seek ungodliness in the house of the righteous”; or lay not wait there for him, as Saul set men to watch the house of David to kill him, (^{<0911>}1 Samuel 19:11); or to take an opportunity and get into it and plunder it, as follows;

spoil not his resting place: by pulling it down, or stripping it of its furniture; by robbing him of the substance in it, and thus disturbing his rest, and destroying the place of it; or the place where he lies down as a sheep in its fold, or as the shepherd in his cottage, of which the words in the text are used; and so denote that as the righteous man is like a sheep, harmless and innocent, those that lay in wait for him and spoil him are no other than wolves.

Ver. 16. *For a just [man] falleth seven times, and riseth up [again]*, etc.] This is to be understood of a truly just man; not of one that is only outwardly and seemingly so, or of temporary believers and nominal professors; but of such who are thoroughly convinced of their own unrighteousness, and believe in Christ for righteousness, and have it applied and imputed to them; as well as have principles of grace and righteousness implanted in them, and live righteously in this evil world; these often fall either into troubles or into sins, and indeed into both, and the one is the cause of the other; and both senses may be retained: the former seems more agreeable to the context, and runs thus, lay not wait to a just man’s dwelling to do him any hurt; for though he should be ensnared, and stumble, and fall into distress and calamity, yet he will rise again out of it, and so all attempts upon him are vain and fruitless; many are the righteous man’s afflictions he falls into, but the Lord delivers out of all; he delivers him in six troubles, and even in seven, (^{<1349>}Psalm 34:19 ^{<1659>}Job 5:19); or in many, one after another; he rises out of them all; he comes out of great tribulations, and at last safely enters the kingdom of heaven; and

therefore it is to no purpose to lie in wait for him: and this sense is strengthened by the words following, “rejoice not when thine enemy falleth”, (⁽²¹⁴⁷⁾Proverbs 24:17); but the latter sense of falling into sin has been anciently received, and not to be rejected; and which generally precedes and is the cause of falling into trouble. A just man, though he does not fall from his righteousness, which is an everlasting one, nor from the grace of God; yet he may fall into temptation, and by it he may fall into sin, as every just man does; “for there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not”, (⁽²⁰⁷²⁾Ecclesiastes 7:20); and that frequently, even every day; and therefore stands every day in need of fresh application of pardoning grace, for which he is directed to pray daily; and he may be left to fall foully into very gross sins, as David, Peter, and others; but not totally and finally, so as to perish; being on the heart of God, in the hands of Christ, on him the foundation, united to him, and kept by the power of God, he shall and does rise again sooner or later; not by his own power and strength, but by the strength of the Lord; he rises by renewed repentance, and under the fresh discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy to heal his backslidings;

but the wicked shall fall into mischief; or “evil”^{f666}; into the evil of sin, and there lie and wallow in it, as the swine in the mire, and never rise out of it; and into the evil of punishment, into hell itself, from whence there will be no deliverance; and oftentimes they fall into mischief in this world, into trouble and distress, into poverty and want, in which they live and die, and never recover out of it; to which agrees what follows.

Ver. 17. *Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth*, etc.] These words are spoken not to the wicked man, (⁽²¹⁴⁵⁾Proverbs 24:15); but to the just man, or Solomon’s son, or the children of Wisdom; for by the “enemy” is meant such who are at enmity with the people of God, as the seed of the serpent, and those after the flesh, are: and when these “fall”, saints should not “rejoice”; as when they fall into sin; for so to do would be to act as wicked “charity [which] rejoiceth not in iniquity”, (⁽⁴⁶³⁶⁾1 Corinthians 13:6): or rather when they fall into calamity and distress; for this is also the part which wicked men act towards the people of God, and should not be imitated in; (see Obidiah 1:12 ⁽³⁷⁰⁸⁾Micah 7:8 ⁽⁶¹¹⁰⁾Revelation 11:10). Joy may be expressed at the fall of the public enemies of God and his people, as was by the Israelites at the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, (⁽²⁵⁰⁾Exodus 15:1); and as will be by the church at the destruction of antichrist, and which they are called upon to do, (⁽⁶⁸³⁰⁾Revelation 18:20 19:1,2); partly on

account of their own deliverance and safety, and chiefly because of the glory of God, and of his justice displayed therein; see (^{<1880>}Psalm 58:10); but as private revenge is not to be sought, nor acted, so joy at the calamity and ruin of a private enemy, or a man's own enemy, should not be expressed; but rather he is to be pitied and helped; see (^{<1871>}Proverbs 25:21,22); for to love an enemy, and show regard to him, is the doctrine both of the Old and of the New Testament;

and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth; even secret joy should not be indulged, gladness in the heart, though it does not appear in the countenance, and is not expressed in words; no, not at the least appearance of mischief, when he only stumbles and is ready to fall; and much less should there be exultation and rejoicings made in an open manner at the utter ruin of him.

Ver. 18. *Lest the Lord see [it], and it displease him*, etc.] Who sees all things, not only external actions, but the heart, and the inward motions of it; and though men may hide the pleasure they feel at the misery of an enemy from others, they cannot hide it from the Lord; nor is this said by way of doubt, but as a certain thing; and which the Lord not barely sees, but takes notice of, and to such a degree as to resent it, and show his displeasure at it by taking the following step;

and he turn away his wrath from him; remove the effects of it, raise him out of his fallen and distressed condition, and restore him to his former prosperous one; and not only so, but turn it upon thee, as Gersom supplies the words, and not amiss; so that there is a strange and sudden change of circumstances; thou that was pleasing thyself with the distress of thine enemy art fallen into the same, and he is delivered out of it; which must be a double affliction to such a man; so that by rejoicing at an enemy, he is doing his enemy good and himself hurt; (see ^{<1876>}Proverbs 17:5).

Ver. 19. *Fret not thyself because of evil [men]*, etc.] Because of their outward prosperity and worldly happiness, any more than rejoice at their adversity; neither do the one nor the other; where the one prevails, the other does also; by the frequent repetition of this advice, it looks as if this evil is what good men are prone to, and which was very common in Solomon's time, and in the time of his father David, from whom he seems to have borrowed these words, (^{<1870>}Psalm 37:1,7); (see ^{<1877>}Proverbs 23:17 24:1);

neither be thou envious at the wicked; though they may stand when thou fallest, or be in prosperity when thou art in adversity; the reasons follow.

Ver. 20. *For there shall be no reward to the evil [man]*, etc.] No reward of good things, such as is for the righteous in a way of grace; but he shall have a reward of evil things, a just recompence of reward for his sins: of “no end”^{f667}; there will be an end of his life in this world, and there will be an end of his prosperity; but, as the Targum is, there will be no “good end” to him; his end will not be like that of the perfect and upright man, for it will be cut off, (⁴⁹⁷⁵⁷Psalm 37:37,38); or, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “the wicked have no hope of future things”; no good hope of everlasting happiness; they have their good things now, and their evil things hereafter; and therefore are not to be fretted at and envied. Aben Ezra interprets it, they shall have no offspring or issue, son or nephew; the word is sometimes used for posterity;

the candle of the wicked shall be put out; meaning not the dim light of nature in them, nor the light of life before their time, so Aben Ezra; but their prosperity, riches, splendour, and glory, which candle is often put out while they live, and always at death; after which they have no more light, honour, and happiness; even not so much as the light of a candle, to which their prosperity in this life is compared, it being at best but small, and of a short continuance; see (⁴⁸⁸⁷⁵Job 18:5,6 21:17); and therefore should not be the object of the envy of good men, who are in a more happy and stable condition than they.

Ver. 21. *My son, fear thou the Lord, and the king*, etc.] First the Lord, and then the king; and such as fear the Lord are generally loyal to their king; the fear of God includes love to him, reverence of him, faith in him, submission to him, and the whole worship of him, inward and outward, attended with holiness of life and conversation: and the king, who is under God, is to be feared also, with a fear suitable to him; he is to be loved and revered, to be trusted in and submitted to, in everything consistent with the fear of God and obedience to him; in whatever is not contrary to his laws, commands, and ordinances; (see ⁴¹²³1 Peter 2:13-17);

[and] meddle not with them that are given to change; in political things; that are for new laws, new forms of government, a new ministry, and a new king; never easy with the government under which they are, but are continually entering into plots, conspiracies, and rebellions, who, instead of fearing God and the king, change the laws and commandments of God and

the king, and therefore to be shunned. Some render it, “with rebels”; the Targum and Syriac version, “with fools”; as all such persons are, and should be avoided as scandalous and dangerous: mix not with them, as the word ^{f668} signifies; keep no company, and have no conversation with them, lest you be brought into danger and mischief by them. Or who are given to change in religious things; make innovations in doctrine and practice, always love to hear or say some new thing; turn with every wind, and shift as that does; are tossed about with every wind of doctrine, fickle and inconstant, carried about like meteors in the air, with “divers and strange doctrines”; such as disagree with the perfections of God, the doctrines of Christ and his apostles, the Scriptures of truth, the analogy of faith, anti form of sound words; and so the word here used signifies “divers”, and is so rendered (~~1788~~ Esther 3:8); and may design such who hold doctrines and give into practices divers and different from the faith once delivered to the saints, and from the institutions and appointments of Christ; innovations in doctrine and worship ought not to be admitted of; and such who are for introducing them should not be meddled or mixed with; they should not be countenanced and encouraged; they should not be attended upon or given heed unto; have no fellowship, and join not in communion with them. This is interpreted by some of such who repeat ^{f669} their sins after repentance, or who return a second time to their wickedness after they have repented, as Ben Melech observes.

Ver. 22. *For their calamity shall rise suddenly*, etc.] And come upon those that fear not God, and rebel against the king and the state, and innovate in matters of religion; and especially that bring in damnable heresies, and, while they cry Peace, peace, and are pleasing themselves with their new schemes and prosperous success, swift and sudden destruction comes upon them, (~~600~~ 2 Peter 2:1 ~~1788~~ 1 Thessalonians 5:3);

and who knoweth the ruin of them both? of those that fear not the Lord, nor the king; or of those who are given to change, and innovate in things civil and religious; and of those who meddle with them and join themselves to them: the ruin of themselves and families, in a civil sense, is great and inexpressible, who rebel against their prince, and endeavour to change and subvert the present government; and the ruin of the souls of men, both of the deceivers and the deceived, is beyond all conception and expression.

Ver. 23. *These [things] also [belong] to the wise*, etc.] Both what is said before concerning fearing God and the king; these belong to the wise and

unwise, rich and poor, great and small; particularly judges and civil magistrates, and all subordinate governors, who have, or ought to have, a competency of wisdom; these ought to fear God and the king, as well as private subjects; and also what follows after, especially in this verse and (^{<2224>}Proverbs 24:24-26). Some render the words, “these things also [are the sayings] of wise men”^{<670>}; not of Solomon, but of other wise men in his time, or who lived after him, and before the men of Hezekiah copied out the proverbs in the following chapters; (see ^{<2251>}Proverbs 25:1); but it seems more than probable that what follows to the end of the chapter are the words of Solomon, as (^{<2243>}Proverbs 24:33,34) most clearly are, compared with (^{<2160>}Proverbs 6:10, 11);

[it is] not good to have respect of persons in judgment; in trying causes in a court of judicature, no regard should be had to the persons of men by the judge on the bench, as the rich more than to the poor; or to a relation, a friend, an intimate acquaintance, more than to a stranger; but the justice of the cause ought to be attended to, and sentence given according to it, let it fall as it will: God does not accept persons, nor regard the rich more than the poor; nor should they that stand in his stead, and who in some sense represent him, (^{<2295>}Leviticus 19:15) (^{<2207>}Deuteronomy 1:17 ^{<2249>}Job 34:19); nor should Christians in their communities act such a partial part, (^{<2111>}James 2:1-3).

Ver. 24. *He that saith unto the wicked, Thou [art] righteous*, etc.] Not in a private way, or as giving his opinion or character of a man that is wicked, whom either through ignorance or flattery another may call righteous; which may be done and not resented by people and nations; but in an open court of judicature pronounced by the judge, justifying the wicked for reward, and condemning the just, which is an abomination unto the Lord; (see ^{<2175>}Proverbs 17:15 ^{<2123>}Isaiah 5:23); nor should the ministers of the Gospel flatter the wicked, and call them righteous and good men, and strengthen their hands in their wickedness, promising them life though they continue in their evil ways; for though God justifies the ungodly, man should not; nor does he justify them in, but from, their ungodliness; (see ^{<2132>}Ezekiel 13:2);

him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him; the people of the land shall curse him as an unjust judge, as a patron of wickedness and wicked men; as an enemy to justice, and a discourager of truth and honesty, and all good men; and even nations that have not so immediate a concern in the

affair, yet hearing of it shall express their indignation at him and abhorrence of him.

Ver. 25. *But to them that rebuke [him] shall be delight*, etc.] That is, such that rebuke in the gate, or openly, in a court of judicature; that reprove delinquents, such as are found guilty of malpractices, and punish them as they ought to be, according to the laws of God and man; they shall have delight in themselves, peace and pleasure in their own minds; or the people shall delight in them, and speak well of them, and think themselves happy under such a just administration; or the Lord shall delight in them, the beauty or sweetness of the Lord shall come unto them, as Aben Ezra explains it; the Lord shall be sweet and delightful to them, and they shall have pleasure in him;

and a good blessing shall come upon them; or “a blessing of good”^{f671}; a blessing of good things, temporal and spiritual, here and hereafter; the blessing of a good God, and a blessing from him; and a blessing of good men, as opposed to the curse of the people in (~~122~~ Proverbs 24:24).

Ver. 26. *[Every man] shall kiss [his] lips that giveth a right answer.*] Either as a witness to a question put to him in court, to which he answers aptly and uprightly; or rather as a judge, who, having heard a cause, answers and gives his opinion of it faithfully, and pronounces a righteous sentence; everyone will love and respect him, and hearken to him and obey him; both affection and obedience are signified by a kiss; (see ~~152~~ Psalm 2:12 ~~201~~ Song of Solomon 8:1).

Ver. 27. *Prepare thy work without*, etc.] As Solomon did for the building of the temple; timber and stones were prepared, hewed, squared, and fitted for the building before brought thither, (~~115~~ 1 Kings 5:18 6:7); or diligently attend to thy business without doors, whatever it is, that thou mayest provide for thyself and family the necessaries and conveniences of life, which are in the first place to be sought after;

and make it fit for thyself in the field; let nothing be wanting in managing the affairs of husbandry, in tilling the land, in ploughing and sowing, and reaping, and gathering in the increase, that there may be a sufficiency for the support of the family;

and afterwards build thine house; when, though the blessing of God upon thy diligence and industry, thou art become rich, or however hast such a competent substance as to be able to build a good house, and furnish it in a

handsome manner, then do it; but first take care of the main point, that you have a sufficiency to finish it; see the advice of Christ, (^{<4148>}Luke 14:28,29); necessaries are first to be sought after, before things ornamental and superfluous; first take care to live, and then, if you can, build a fine house. Jarchi interprets this of a man's first getting fields, vineyards, and cattle, something beforehand in the world, and then take a wife, when he is able to maintain her, whereby his house may be built up; (see ^{<4041>}Ruth 4:11).

Ver. 28. *Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause*, etc.]

Unless forced unto it, except there is some urgent reason for it; not upon any trivial account, or in any frivolous matter; never appear forward and eager to bear witness against him, and, whenever obliged to it, be not a false witness, but speak truth, whether thy neighbour be a friend or a foe;

and deceive [not] with thy lips; by bearing a false testimony, the judge, thy neighbour and thyself; for though men may be deceived, God cannot: or, shouldest thou do so, "thou wouldest break" and cut him to pieces "with thy lips"^{<672>}; which is the sense of the words according to R. Judah, as Ben Melech relates.

Ver. 29. *Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me*, etc.] He has falsely accused and reproached me, and bore a false testimony, or suborned false witnesses against me, and I will do the same to him, now an opportunity serves; but as private revenge itself is sinful, so especially when it is pursued in a wicked way;

I will render to the man according to his work; this should be left to the Lord, whose prerogative it is; (see ^{<1249>}Proverbs 24:19 ^{<6129>}Romans 12:19).

Ver. 30. *I went by the field of the slothful*, etc.] This very probably was a real matter of fact; King Solomon's way lay at a certain time by the field of a slothful man, who never went into it himself, there being a lion in the way; and which he took no care of to manure and till, to plough and sow, but let it lie waste and uncultivated; an emblem of a carnal and worldly professor, and especially an unregenerate man, neglecting the affairs of his soul, his heart remaining like the fallow field unopened and unbroken, hard, obdurate, and impenitent; nothing sown in it, no seed of grace; nor has the seed of the word any place in it, but falling on it lies like seed by the wayside, caught up by every bird;

and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; as the slothful man is, that takes no care to plant and dress it, that it may bring forth fruit to his

own profit and advantage; and as every unregenerate man is, who is unconcerned about his soul, and the welfare of it; whatever understanding he may have of things natural and civil, he has no knowledge of spiritual things, of God in Christ, of himself, his state and condition; of Christ, and the way of peace, life, and salvation by him; of the Spirit, and his work of grace upon the heart; and of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; and so has no regard to the vineyard of his soul, and the plantation and fruitfulness of it; see (²⁰⁰⁶Song of Solomon 1:6).

Ver. 31. *And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns*, etc.] Or “thistles”^{f673}; which grow up of themselves, are the fruit of the curse, and the effect of slothfulness;

[and] nettles had covered the face thereof; so that nothing was to be seen but thorns and thistles, nettles and weeds; and such is the case of the souls of men when neglected, and no concern is had for them; so it is with carnal and worldly professors, who are overrun with the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, comparable to thorns and nettles for their piercing and stinging nature, and the unfruitfulness and unprofitableness of them; such are the thorny ground hearers, (⁴¹³²Matthew 13:22); and such is the case of all unregenerate persons, whose souls are like an uncultivated field, and a neglected vineyard; in which grow naturally the weeds of sin and corruption, comparable to thorns and nettles for their spontaneous production, for the number of them, for their unfruitfulness, and for the pain and distress they bring when conscience is awakened; and because as such ground that bears thorns and nettles is nigh to cursing, and its end to be burned, which is their case; (see ³⁰⁷⁸Hebrews 6:8);

and the stone wall thereof was broken down; the fence about the fields, the wall about the vineyard, to keep out men and beasts; (see ²⁰⁷⁰Isaiah 5:2); which through slothfulness, and want of repair and keeping up, fell to decay, (²¹⁰⁸Ecclesiastes 10:18); and thus carnal professors and unregenerate men, having no guard upon themselves, are open and exposed to every sin, snare, and temptation; Satan has free egress and regress; the evil spirit can go out and come in when he pleases, and bring seven evil spirits more wicked than himself: indeed such is the evil heart of man that it needs no tempter; he is drawn aside of his own lust, and enticed; he is liable to every sin, and to fall into the utmost ruin; he has nothing to protect and defend him; not the Spirit, nor grace, nor power of God.

Ver. 32. *Then I saw, [and] considered it well*, etc.] Or, “when I saw, I considered it well”; or “set my heart it”^{f674}; when he saw as he passed along the field and the vineyard, he, considered who was the owner and proprietor of them; what a sluggish and foolish man he was, and what a ruinous condition his field and vineyard were in.

I looked upon [it, and] received instruction; looked at it again, and took a thorough view of it, and learned something from it; so great and wise a man as Solomon received instruction from the field and vineyard of the slothful and foolish man; learned to be wiser, and to be more diligent in cultivating his own field, and dressing his own vineyard: so from the view and consideration of the slothfulness and folly of unregenerate man, and of the state and condition of his soul, many lessons of instruction may be learned; as that there is no free will and wisdom in men with respect to that which is good; the ruinous state and condition of men, as being all overspread with sin and corruption, in all the powers and faculties of their souls; and that there is nothing in them agreeable to God, but all the reverse; also the necessity of divine grace to put them into a good state, and make them fruitful; moreover, the distinguishing grace of God, which makes others to differ from them; and likewise it is teaching and instructive to good men to use more diligence themselves in things relating to their spiritual good, and to the glory of God.

Ver. 33. *[Yet] a little sleep, a little slumber*, etc.] The sight of the field and vineyard of the slothful put Solomon in mind of an observation he had made before, which fitly describes the disposition and gesture of the sluggard, by which means his field and vineyard came to ruin; while he should be up and tilling his field and planting his vineyard, he is in his bed; and awaking, instead of rising, craves for and indulges himself in another little doze, and which he repeats again and again;

a little folding of the hands to sleep; which ought to have been employed another way; (see Gill on “²¹⁸⁰Proverbs 6:10”).

Ver. 34. *So shall thy poverty come [as] one that travelleth*, etc.] Swiftly and suddenly, both in a temporal and spiritual sense; (see Gill on “²¹⁸¹Proverbs 6:11”);

and thy want as an armed man; irresistibly. Here ends according to some the “second”, according to others the “third” part of this book of Proverbs, another beginning with the following chapter.

CHAPTER 25

Ver. 1. *These [are] are also proverbs of Solomon,* etc.] These that follow to the end of the book, as well as those which go before. Here begins a “third”, some say a “fourth” part of this book. The Targum and Syriac version read,

“these are also the deep proverbs of Solomon;”

and the Arabic version adds,

“the exposition of which is difficult;”

which the men Hezekiah king of Judah copied out; out of the writings of Solomon; out of his three thousand proverbs, it, may be; or out of the public records, which contained an account of his words and deeds. Who these men were is not certain; perhaps his ministers of state, Eliakim, Sheban, and Joah; or the prophets of his time, Isaiah, Micah, and Hosea: the Targum and Syriac version call them his “friends”. Whoever they were, no doubt they were employed by Hezekiah; and which is recorded to his honour, that he was so careful to preserve such useful sayings, and annex them to those that were already collected and put together as above. This verse, it is likely, was written by one of the copiers. The proverbs begin in (~~3182~~ Proverbs 25:2).

Ver. 2. *[It is] the glory of God to conceal a thing,* etc.] Secret things belong unto him, and they are kept so by him: many things which he does reveal, yet the “modus” or manner of them remains hidden; as what relates to his own being, and manner of subsisting; the trinity of Persons in the Godhead; the filiation or the Son, and the procession of the Spirit; the incarnation of Christ, and the like: the predestination of men to life and death, though that there is such a thing is certain, yet who they are is not known; the purposes and decrees of God, all that he determines to do, or shall be done, are known unto him from eternity; but then the times and seasons in which they will be accomplished are kept in his own power; the day and hour of the last judgment none knows but himself: his judgments, and ways in providence, are unsearchable and past finding out; there are many things in it unaccountable to men; nor does he give an account of them to the sons of men; these are at present secrets in his own breast, his

judgments will be made manifest. Now it is his glory to conceal them; they are all known to him, and the reasons of them; he is the omniscient all wise God, and stands in no need of the advice of creatures; nor are they taken into his privy council. Some apply this to his pardoning sin, which is sometimes expressed by “covering” it; and in which the glory of his grace and mercy is greatly displayed. Jarchi interprets it of the history of the work of creation, and Ezekiel’s vision of the wheels, the understanding of which is very difficult; and which the Jews forbid the reading of, as also Solomon’s Song, until men are come to ripeness of years;

but the honour of kings [is] to search out a matter; to investigate everything relating to civil government, and that may be of use to them in the exercise of it; particularly to search into the word of God, and observe the laws in it, and rule according to them; or make such laws as are agreeably to it, and execute them: and to inquire diligently into all causes that are brought before them, that they may find out the truth of things, and pass judgment accordingly; and be able to give reasons for what they do in the public affairs of government, and make it appear that they are according to the rules of truth and justice; and to do so will gain them immortal honour! see (^{<489/6>}Job 29:16).

Ver. 3. *The heaven for height, and the earth for depth*, etc.] These are eminent for what are ascribed to them; nothing is higher than the heavens, nor anything deeper than the earth; the height of the heavens cannot be reached, and the centre of the earth cannot easily be got unto; the heavens above cannot be measured, and the foundation of the earth cannot be searched beneath; at least not by common persons, whatever may be done in their way by astronomers and geometricians. And thus, as the heavens and the earth are immeasurable, (^{<2613/7>}Jeremiah 31:37); so

the heart of kings [is] unsearchable; especially such an one as Solomon was, who had largeness of heart as the sand on the seashore: and this must be understood of such who have the art of governing; for some are so weak in their conduct, and so much expose themselves, that it is easy to see what is in their hearts, and what are the springs of their actions. Wise princes lay their schemes deep, and conceal their designs, and keep their reasons of state secret, so that it is not an easy thing to penetrate into their councils and views: for this does not so much respect the multitude of business they have upon their hearts and hands, as Jarchi and others understand it, as the privacy and secrecy in which they are managed, and

the reasons of which are kept from common persons, Who therefore are not proper judges of them; and who yet will often take upon them to censure and condemn, when they are ignorant of the true cause of such conduct.

Ver. 4. *Take away the dross from the silver*, etc.] By putting it into the furnace, and purging it from it:

and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer; not out of the furnace, a vessel formed and shaped, but pure silver shall come out of it for the refiner; of which a vessel may be made, very honourable, beautiful, and fit for use: the application of it is in (¹⁶⁷⁵Proverbs 25:5).

Ver. 5. *Take away the wicked [from] before the king*, etc.] Wicked ministers and counsellors; they are the “dross”, worthless and useless; yea, hurtful and pernicious. The king is the “refiner”, for whom the vessel is; the kingdom is the silver vessel refined; and which becomes much the better, when wicked men are removed from the court and cabinet council of kings; as well as the king is the happier, and his throne more firm and secure, as follows:

and his throne shall be established in righteousness; which he shall execute, wicked ministers being removed from him, who advised him to take unrighteous measures; and others being put in their room, who counsel him to do acts of justice; whereby his throne is secured, and he sits firm upon it, which before was tottering and shaking, and lie in great danger of being removed from it.

Ver. 6. *Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king*, etc.] Intrude not thyself into his presence; or rush not into it in a rude and irreverent way; or be not ambitious to be a courtier: or “do not appear glorious”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; or “honour thyself”,^{f675} as the word signifies; do not appear too gay at court, or make too splendid an appearance, above thy fortune and station; and which may seem to vie with and outdo the king himself, which will not be well taken; princes love not to be equalled, and much less excelled;

and stand not in the place of great [men]; where the king’s family or his nobles should stand, his ministers and counsellors of state, and those that wait upon him.

Ver. 7. *For better [it is] that it be said unto thee, Come up hither,* etc.] It is much more to thine honour and credit to seat thyself in a place rather beneath than above thee; which being observed by some of the officers at court, or by him whose business it is to look after such things, he will beckon or call to thee to come up to a higher and more honourable place:

than that thou shouldest be put lower, in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen; than that thou shouldest be thrust away with a severe rebuke for thy boldness and arrogance, in approaching too near the king's person, and taking the place of some great man, which did not become thee, and be forced down to a lower place, to thy great mortification; and the more, as this will be in the presence of the prince thou hadst the curiosity of seeing, and the ambition of making thyself acceptable to, by a gay and splendid appearance; and now with great disgrace turned out of his presence, or at least driven to a great distance from him. Our Lord seems to refer to this passage, in (⁴⁴⁸Luke 14:8-10).

Ver. 8. *Go not forth hastily to strive,* etc.] To go to law with a neighbour; think well of it beforehand; consider the nature of the cause, whether right or wrong; or whether it is a matter of such moment as to go to law about; whether it will not be deemed a frivolous and vexatious suit; whether able to bear the expenses of it, and what may probably be the success of it;

lest [thou know not] what to do in the end thereof; for a livelihood, having spent all thy substance in the lawsuit, and so reduced to poverty as not to know how to live, or how and where to show thy face, through the disgrace that shall fall upon time by losing the cause;

when that neighbour hath put thee to shame; in open court, and proved himself to be in the right, and that thou art in the wrong; himself an honest man, and thee a litigious person.

Ver. 9. *Debate thy cause with thy neighbour [himself],* etc.] Between thee and him alone; lay the matter before him, and hear what he has to say for himself, by which you will better judge of the nature of the cause; try to compromise things, and make up the difference between you, which is much better than to commence a lawsuit; at least such a step should be taken first; (see ⁴⁶⁵Matthew 5:25);

and discover not a secret to another; if the thing in controversy is a secret, do not acquaint another person with it; keep it among yourselves, if the affair can be made up without bringing it into a court of judicature; besides,

by communicating it to others, you may have bad counsel given, and be led to take indirect methods: or, “the secret of another”, or, “another secret do not discover”^{f676}; if you know anything scandalous and reproachful of your neighbour and his family, you are contending with, which does not concern the cause in hand, do not divulge it, as persons from a spirit of revenge are apt to do, when they are quarrelling or litigating a point with each other.

Ver. 10. *Lest he that heareth [it] put thee to shame*, etc.] Or, “reproach thee”^{f677} with treachery and deceit. Either the person of whom it is told, or the person to whom it is told; who may make thee ashamed, either by fixing the odious character of a defamer, a whisperer, and backbiter, on thee; or by making a retaliation, and in his turn make known some secret things concerning thyself, which before were not known, and, now published, will be to thy disgrace;

and thine infamy turn not away; it shall stick so close to thee, that thou shalt never get clear of it as long as thou livest, or ever retrieve thy credit; the brand of infamy shall ever be upon thee.

Ver. 11. *A word fitly spoken*, etc.] Or, “a word spoken on its wheels”^{f678}: that proceeds aright, keeps due order, is well circumstanced as to matter, method, time, place, and persons; a discourse well put together, properly pronounced, roundly, easily, and fluently delivered to proper persons, and adapted to their circumstances; and “seasonably” spoken, as the Targum and many versions render it:

[is like] apples of gold in pictures of silver; either like apples made of gold, and so valuable and precious; or as apples, called golden from their colour, as golden pippins, and golden rennets; or oranges, which are sometimes called golden apples: either of these in silver cases and enclosures, as Aben Ezra and Gersom interpret the word, or in a silver cup, as the Syriac version, or in silver lattices, as Maimonides, through which they may be seen, look very pleasant and delightful. The words may design, as some think, silver baskets of network^{f679}; into which golden apples or oranges being put, and placed on a table, look very beautiful; and to such a word fitly spoken is compared. This may be applied to the word of the Gospel, as spoken by Christ, the great Prophet of the church; who has the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to weary souls, (²⁸⁰¹Isaiah 50:4); and by his ministers, who publish the Gospel, that faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation: this being the word of salvation, is fitly spoken to all sensible sinners, and must be exceeding agreeable to them;

since it is of salvation from all sin, and for the chief of sinners, and entirely of free grace; includes all blessings in it, and is for ever; and since it is a proclamation of pardon of all sorts of sins and sinners, and of all their sins, and according to the riches of grace; and is also the word of reconciliation, and publishes peace to rebels, who could not make their own peace with God; and yet this is done by the blood of Christ, as the Gospel declares: and, seeing it is likewise the word of righteousness, which reveals the righteousness of Christ as justifying, when a man's own righteousness will not acquit him; and invites weary souls to Christ for rest, and therefore must be grateful to all such persons, and be esteemed as valuable as balls or apples of gold; and as pleasant and delightful to see and hear of as those set in silver baskets of network; and be as refreshing and comfortable, and as grateful to the taste, as real apples of the best kind; (see ^{2M1P}Song of Solomon 2:2, 5). It may also be applied to the promises of grace, seasonably spoken, and suitably applied by the Spirit of God; who takes the promises which are in Christ, and shows and opens them to souls in distress, at the most proper and seasonable time; and which are exceeding great and precious, yield abundance of pleasure and delight, and are very comfortable. Yea, this may be applied to the words of good men, in private conversation, either by way of counsel, or comfort, or admonition; and to every word that is with grace, and ministers grace to the hearer, and is for the use of edifying, when time, place, persons, and circumstances, are observed. Maimonides^{f680} thinks the external sense of the word is meant by the silver, and the internal sense by the gold; which latter is seen through, and is much better than the former.

Ver. 12. [*As*] *an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold*, etc.] As a golden earring, when first put on, gives pain and uneasiness; but, being well hung and fixed, is very ornamental, being of fine gold, and especially when any jewels are upon it; which may be meant by the ornament, as the word is rendered, (^{2M1P}Song of Solomon 7:1);

[*so is*] *a wise reprovewer upon an obedient ear*; such is the reproof of a wise man, which is seasonably given, in a fit and proper manner; and which appears to proceed from love, and is designed for good, and done in great affection and faithfulness: this, though it may be a little grating to the ear at first, yet, when well considered and received, instead of leaving any infamy or reproach on the person reprovewer, it is an ornament to him, as well as reflects honour upon the reprovewer. It may be rendered, “[so is] he that reprovewerth a wise man, upon” or “with an obedient ear”^{f681}; a wise man that

has an obedient or hearing ear, who is so wise as to altered to reproofs given him, and which he takes kindly, and receives profit and advantage from them; (see ¹⁰⁰⁸Proverbs 9:8 15:31).

Ver. 13. *As the cold of snow in the time of harvest*, etc.] As water as cold as snow; or as a breeze of air, such as in a time of snow; and so Jarchi,

“as the cold of the days of snow, which a man desires in summer, and not snow simply, for snow itself is not good in the time of harvest;”

(see ¹⁰⁰¹Proverbs 24:1). Or rather “as a shield” or “covering of snow”^{f682}, as the word signifies: perhaps, as Gussetius^{f683} thinks, a vessel in such a form, in which snow was kept in summer, is meant; and the same word, the two first radical letters being doubled, is used for the pot, or urn, in which the manna was kept, (¹⁰⁶³Exodus 16:33). As snow, that in those hot countries used to be kept in vessels, in places underground, to cool their drink with in summertime; just as ice is kept with us, in like places, for the same purpose; and then the sense is, as drink cooled with snow is very agreeable, and exceeding refreshing to those that labour in the field in the time of harvest;

[so is] a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters: such an one that is sent with a message, and faithfully executes it, while he is gone, the mind of his master is very thoughtful about the it sue and success of it; but when he returns and gives him an account of it, and especially when he succeeds to his wish; it “restores” and settles his mind, as the word^{f684} signifies; and gives him a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction, and renders the messenger dear and valuable to him. Christ is the messenger, one of a thousand, sent by his divine Father on a message of grace and salvation, in which he has succeeded being faithful to him that appointed him; and so exceeding acceptable to him, his servant, his elect, in whom his soul delighteth! Gospel ministers are messengers, and faithful ones, whose feet are beautiful, and their words acceptable to souls to whom they are sent, and are a sweet savour to him that sent them; and who will commend them as good and faithful servants, and appoint them rulers over many cities, and introduce them into his joy.

Ver. 14. *Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift*, etc.] Of his charity and alms deeds; bragging of great things he does this way, when he does nothing; or who is very vain in making large promises of what he will give,

when he does not perform; either not having it in his heart, or in the power of his hands, to give what he promises; Satan like, who offered to give all the kingdoms of this world to Christ, if he would worship him, when nothing of it belonged unto him, or was in his power to give: and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “a glorious man”; that is, a vainglorious man, and “not fulfilling promises”. It may very well be applied to false teachers, who boast of their gifts and spiritual knowledge, when they have none; speaking great swelling words of vanity, when they are empty of all that is good, and are as follow:

[is like] like clouds and wind without rain; which make a show and appearance of rain, promise much, but produce none; (see ^{<6027>}2 Peter 2:17,18) (^{<6012>}Jude 1:12).

Ver. 15. *By long forbearing is a prince persuaded,* etc.] To come into measures, and do that which his council and ministry advise him to, and to which he may seem at first very averse; but by a mild and gentle representation of things, by an humble submission of them to him, and by frequent remonstrances and patient waiting, his mind is softened, bent, and inclined to take their advice, and pursue the measures suggested to him; which, had they been pressed with heat, haughtiness, and haste, would have been rejected;

and a soft tongue breaketh the bone; or “hardness”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; soft words, or words delivered in soft language, remove hardness and roughness from the minds of men; and work upon, influence, and bend men, whose wills are obstinate and stubborn, and make them pliable and tractable: so David, with a soft tongue, wrought upon Saul, his enemy; and Abigail, by her soft language, turned the mind of David, who was bent upon the destruction of Nabal, (^{<0246>}1 Samuel 24:16 25:32); (see ^{<0151>}Proverbs 15:1). Jarchi interprets this soft tongue of prayer and supplication, by which severe things against sinners are removed from them; and so he understands the former clause of the forbearance of God, which gives encouragement to sinners, to persuade him in their favour by repentance and prayer; (see ^{<0136>}Matthew 18:26,27).

Ver. 16. *Hast thou found honey?* etc.] Of which there was great plenty in Judea; and was to be found in fields and woods, (^{<0125>}1 Samuel 14:25,26);

eat so much as is sufficient for thee; to satisfy appetite, without overcharging the stomach; what may be conducive to health, and no more;

lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it; that is, overfilled; filled to a loathing of it, so as to cause a casting of it up this is not merely to be understood in a literal sense; something more is intended, as in (³⁰⁴³Proverbs 24:13); and according to the sense there, that which Maimonides^{f685} gives of this seems agreeable; that it respects the getting of wisdom and knowledge, which, like honey, is sweet and desirable, and excellent, and nourishing, moderately used: but then persons should take care to keep within due bounds, and not seek to be too wise; or to exercise themselves in things too high for them, and aim at that which is above their capacity; but should content themselves with what is within their reach and compass: and so Gersom understands it. Some think that moderation in the use of worldly things and lawful pleasures is here recommended: and others that the words refer to what follow; that when a man has got a pleasant and delightful friend, he should not visit him too often; lest, too much familiarity bringing contempt, he should lose his friend: so Jarchi connects the words,

Ver. 17. *Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house*, etc.] Not but that it is commendable to be neighbourly and friendly, or for one neighbour to visit another; but then it should not be very frequent; a man should not be always or often at his neighbour's house. So the words may be rendered, "make thy foot precious" or "rare at thy neighbour's house"^{f686}; be seldom there;

lest he be weary of thee, and [so] hate thee; or, "lest he be sated with thee"^{f687}; filled with thy company to a loathing of it, as the stomach with eating too much honey, and so his friendship be turned into hatred.

Ver. 18. *A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour*, etc.] In whose house he has often been, and whom he has frequently visited; and, observing what was done there, not only discovers and tells abroad the secrets of his family, but even things which are false; yea, in a court of judicature, appears a witness against him, and swears falsely to his hurt and prejudice. Such a man

[is] a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow; that is, to his neighbour, against whom he bears false witness; and, by so doing, he mauls his fame, his credit, character, and reputation; and, as with a sword, takes away his life; and against whom there is no more guarding than against a sharp arrow, that comes from afar, suddenly and swiftly.

Ver. 19. *Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble*, etc.] It is not good to put confidence in any man, not in princes, nor in the best of men; much less in an unfaithful, prevaricating, and treacherous man; and especially in a time of distress and trouble, depending on his help and assistance, which is leaning on a broken reed, and trusting to a broken staff. Or, “the confidence of an unfaithful man in time of trouble”^{f688}; that which he puts confidence in; who trusts in his riches, or in his righteousness, or in his own heart, all which are vain and deceitful:

[is like] a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint; which are so far from being of any use, the one in eating food, and the other in walking, that they are both an hindrance to those actions, and cause pain and uneasiness: or, “a bad tooth”, so the Targum and Syriac version; a rotten one.

Ver. 20. *[As] he that taketh away a garment in cold weather*, etc.] Either takes it off of himself, or another person, when it would be rather more proper to put another garment on, and so is exposed to the injury of cold weather;

[and as] vinegar upon nitre: nitre was found in Egypt, beyond Memphis, as Strabo says^{f689}; there were two mines of nitre, which produced much, and thence it was called the Nitriotic Nome: others say, nitre has its name from Nitria, a town in Egypt^{f690}, which gives name to the Nitrian desert, where there is a lake called Latron; from the bottom of which, that sort of nitre, called Natron, arises to the top, as is apprehended, and there, by the heat of the sun, condenses into this kind of substance^{f691}, which will react with an acid; and so vinegar poured upon it will irritate and disturb it, cause it to react, and make a noise and a hissing. This must be understood only of this sort of nitre, of the nitre of the ancients; not of the moderns, which is no other than saltpetre; for though this will ferment with vinegar, saltpetre will not^{f692}: nitre is dissolved by a liquid, but not any, only that which is cold, as Aristotle observes^{f693}, as is vinegar; and therefore, with great propriety, this is joined to what goes before;

so [is] he that singeth songs to a heavy heart; rather distresses and afflicts him the more; as he cannot sing himself, he cannot bear to hear others sing; such rather should be condoled and wept with than to have songs sung to them. Some understand the words in a sense the reverse; the word rendered taketh away, in the first clause, has the signification of adorning with a garment; hence they render it, “as he that putteth on a garment”^{f694} for ornament in cold weather, and as vinegar to nitre, so is he that singeth

songs to a heavy heart"; that is, as an additional garment drives away cold, and vinegar dissolves nitre, so singing songs to a heavy hearted man drives away sorrow; as in the case of Saul, such an effect had music on him, (^{<0962>}1 Samuel 16:21); or rather, to put on a thin garment for ornament in cold weather is as absurd and unseasonable as to put vinegar to nitre, or to a wound, as Schultens, and to sing songs to a heavy heart; all absurd.

Ver. 21. *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat*, etc.] Which includes all manner of food; whatever persons may have in their houses, that they should bring out and feed the hungry with, even though an enemy;

and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; which was what was usually and in common drank in those countries. These two, bread and water, take in all the necessaries of life; and giving them is expressive of all acts of beneficence and humanity to be performed to enemies; (see ^{<1162>}2 Kings 6:22); or "drink to him", so Pagninus and Montanus; which is still more expressive of respect and kindness.

Ver. 22. *For thou shall heap coals of fire upon his head*, etc.] Not to increase his punishment and damnation, the more aggravated by kindness shown him; but to bring him by such means to a sense of former injuries, and to shame for them, repentance of them, and love of the person injured, and carefulness for the future of doing him any further wrong;

and the Lord shall reward thee: with good things, for all the good done to thine enemy, whether it has the desired effect on him or not; or whether he rewards thee or not; (see ^{<6121>}Romans 12:20,21).

Ver. 23. *The north wind driveth away rain*, etc.] So the geographer^{f695} says, the swift north wind drives away the moist clouds; which usually come from the opposite quarter, the south. The word used has the signification of conceiving, and begetting, and bringing forth; hence some^{f696} render it to a different sense, and so the Targum,

"the north wind bringeth forth rain;"

and in this sense Gersom interprets it, and says,

"the north wind produces rain in Jerusalem, because it brings there the vapours that ascend from the sea, which lies north unto it;"

and the philosopher^{f697} says, that in the northern parts of the world the south wind produces rain; and in the southern parts the north wind produces it, as in Judea. But in (~~3872~~ Job 37:22), fair, fine, golden, serene, “weather”, is said to “come out of the north”; agreeably to which, the north wind is by Homer^{f698} called *αἰψρηγενετης*, the producer of serene weather; and by Virgil^{f699} “clarus aquilo”, i.e. what makes serene. The Arabic version reads it, “the south wind”; and that does bring rain, and, as that version has it, excites the clouds. But the first reading and sense of the words seem best^{f700}, and agree with what follows:

so [doth] an angry countenance a backbiting tongue; drives it away, discourages and silences it. When a man puts on a stern countenance, a frowning and angry look, on such who bring him slanderous reports and idle tales of their neighbours, and reproach and backbite them, it checks them, and puts a stop to their practices; whereas listening to them, and especially with an air of pleasure, encourages them in them; were there not so many that take pleasure in hearing those talebearers and backbiters, were they more roughly dealt with, as the blustering north wind does with the rain, there would not be so much of this evil practised.

Ver. 24. [*It is] better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.*] (See Gill on “~~3209~~ Proverbs 21:9”).

Ver. 25. [*As] cold waters to a thirsty soul*, etc.] Water is naturally cold; and is by classic writers expressed by “cold” itself^{f701}, and is very refreshing to one athirst through heat: or, “to a weary soul”^{f702}; to one wearied with labour; or to a traveller weary with travelling, especially in hot countries, as in the deserts of Arabia, or in places where it is rare to meet with a brook, stream, or fountain of water; which, when he does, it is exceeding pleasant and agreeable to him;

so [is] good news from a far country; so acceptable is it to hear from a friend in a distant part of the world, and particularly to hear good news of him. Such is the Gospel; it is good news, and glad tidings of good things; it brings the good news of the grace, and favour, and good will of God to men; of his appointment and provision of a Saviour for them; of the incarnation of Christ; of salvation being wrought out by him for the chief of sinners, which is free, full, and for ever; and of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, through him, And this comes “from a far country”; from heaven, the better country than Canaan, which was a type of it, or any country in this world, and which is afar from hence; the Gospel

comes from God in heaven, and it is a report concerning that; it is good news to saints, of an estate they have there, an inheritance, a house, a city and kingdom prepared for them there: this news is brought by the prophets of the Old Testament, who diligently inquired of salvation by Christ; by the angels at Christ's incarnation; by John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ; by Christ himself, who was anointed to preach good tidings to the meek; and by his apostles, and all the faithful ministers of the word: and the message they bring is good news; not to carnal and self-righteous persons, but to sensible sinners; and to them it is as cold waters to a weary or thirsty soul; it assuages the heat of the law, and the wrath that works in the conscience; it quenches the thirst of carnal things, and after a man's own righteousness; it revives and refreshes his weary drooping spirits, and fills him with a joy unspeakable and full of glory; as Jacob's spirits were revived on hearing the good news of Joseph, (^{<0452>}Genesis 45:26-28).

Ver. 26. *A righteous man falling dozen before the wicked*, etc.] Either falling into calamity and distress by means of the wicked man, through his malice and cunning, and which he seeing, rejoices at; or crouching unto him, bowing before him, yielding to him, not daring to oppose or reprove him; or falling into sin in his presence, which he ever after reproaches him for, and openly exposes him, so that his usefulness is lost; and especially if he joins with the wicked man in his course of living; and particularly if a civil magistrate, and acts unrighteously in his office: he

[is as] a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring; like a spring or fountain muddied with the feet of men or beasts; so that; he who was before as a clear spring of flowing water, a fountain of justice to his neighbours, from whom good doctrine and wholesome advice flowed, is now of no use by instruction or example, but the contrary.

Ver. 27. *[It is] not good to eat much honey*, etc.] That is too much otherwise it is good to eat, (^{<02013>}Proverbs 24:13); but too much is hurtful, it surfeits the stomach increases choler^{f703} and creates loathing; and indeed, too much of anything is bad^{f704};

so [for men] to search their own glory [is not] glory: to set forth their own excellencies, to sound forth their own praises to seek honour of men, to use all methods to gain popular applause; this is not glorious and praiseworthy, but dishonourable; or it may be rendered as it literally lies in the original, "but to search out", or "the searching out of their glory [is] glory"^{f705}; either the glory of righteous men, as Aben Ezra interprets it,

such as stand and do not fall before the wicked; to search out their excellencies and virtues, and follow their example, is glorious and honourable: or to search the glory of the knowledge of divine things, comparable to honey, is commendable and glorious; for though a man may eat too much honey, yet he cannot have too much knowledge of divine and spiritual things, or be satiated and overfilled with them; to which the Septuagint version agrees, “but we ought to honour glorious words”: the glorious truths of the word of God ought to be had in great esteem, and to search out the glory of them is honourable; our Lord directs to a search of the Scriptures, because they testify of him, (~~REF~~ John 5:39); and we can never know too much of him, or of the precious doctrines of the Gospel; unless this is to be understood of such things as should not be curiously inquired into; men should not be wise above what is written nor search into those things which God has concealed; as his own nature and perfections, the mode of subsisting of the three Persons in the Godhead, his secret purposes and decrees, and unsearchable judgments. To which sense agrees the Vulgate Latin version,

“so he who is the searcher of majesty shall be oppressed by glory;”

he shall be bore down by it, and not able to bear the glory of it: and the Targum is,

“to eat much honey is not good, nor to search glorious words.”

Jarchi takes the words in this sense; and illustrates them by the work of creation, Ezekiel’s vision of the wheels, the decrees of God, and the reasons of them.

Ver. 28. *He that [hath] no rule over his own spirit*, etc.] His affections and passions, puts no restraint, unto them, as the word signifies; no guard against them, no fence about them, to curb his curiosity, to check his pride and vanity, to restrain his wrath and anger and revenge, and keep within due bounds his ambition and itch of vainglory;

[is like] a city that broken down [and] without walls; into which the may go with pleasure, and which is exposed to the rapine and violence of everyone; and so a man that has no command of himself and passions, but gives the reins to them, is exposed to the enemy of souls, Satan and is liable to every sin, snare and temptation.

CHAPTER 26

Ver. 1. *As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest*, etc.] Which were very undesirable and unseasonable, yea, very hurtful to the fruits of the earth; and a great obstruction to the labourers in the harvest, and a hinderance to the gathering of it in; and were very rare and uncommon in Judea; it was even a miracle for thunder and rain to be in wheat harvest, (^{<09217>}1 Samuel 12:17);

so honour is not seemly for a fool: for a wicked man; such should not be favoured by kings, and set in high places of honour and trust; “folly set in great dignity”, or foolish and bad men set in honourable places, are as unsuitable and inconvenient as snow and rain in summer and harvest, and should be as rare as they; and they are as hurtful and pernicious, since they discourage virtue and encourage vice, and hinder the prosperity of the commonwealth; such vile persons are contemned in the eyes of good men, and are disregarded of God; he will not give, theft, glory here nor hereafter; the wise shall inherit it, but shame shall be the promotion of fools, (^{<2185>}Proverbs 3:35); (see ^{<2106>}Ecclesiastes 10:6).

Ver. 2. *As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying*, etc.] As a bird, particularly the sparrow, as the word^{f706} is sometimes rendered, leaves its nest and wanders from it; and flies here and there, and settles nowhere; and as the swallow flies to the place from whence it came; or the wild pigeon, as some^{f707} think is meant, which flies away very swiftly: the swallow has its name in Hebrew from liberty, because it flies about boldly and freely, and makes its nest in houses, to which it goes and comes without fear;

so the curse causeless shall not come; the mouths of fools or wicked men are full of cursing and bitterness, and especially such who are advanced above others, and are set in high places; who think they have a right to swear at and curse those below them, and by this means to support their authority and power; but what signify their curses which are without a cause? they are vain and fruitless, like Shimei’s cursing David; they fly away, as the above birds are said to do, and fly over the heads of those on whom they are designed to light; yea, return and fall upon the heads of those that curse, as the swallow goes to the place from whence it came; it being a bird of passage, (^{<2487>}Jeremiah 8:7); in the winter it flies away and betakes itself to some islands on rocks called from thence “chelidonian”^{f708}.

According to the “Keri”, or marginal reading, for here is a double reading, it may be rendered, “so the curse causeless shall come to him”^{f709}; that gives it without any reason. The Septuagint takes in both,

“so a vain curse shall not come upon any;”

what are all the anathemas of the church of Rome? who can curse whom God has not cursed? yea, such shall be cursed themselves; see (~~KA917~~ Psalm 109:17).

Ver. 3. *A whip for the horse*, etc.] One that is dull of going, or refractory and wants breaking;

a bridle for the ass; not to curb and restrain it from going too fast, asses being generally dull; but to direct its way and turn it when necessary, it being stiffnecked and obstinate; though the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it a “spear” or “goad”, something to prick with, and excite it to motion; and so the Targum; or otherwise one would have thought the whip was fitter for the ass and the bridle for the horse;

and a rod for the fool’s back; suggesting that the fool, or wicked man, is like the horse or the mule; though not without understanding of things natural, yet of things divine and moral; and as stupid as the ass, however wise he may conceit himself to be, being born like a wild ass’s colt; and instead of honour being given him, stripes should be laid upon him; he should be reproved sharply, and corrected for his wickedness, especially the causeless curser, (~~AK99~~ Proverbs 19:29).

Ver. 4. *Answer not a fool according to his folly*, etc.] Sometimes a fool, or wicked man, is not to be answered at all; as the ministers of Hezekiah answered not a word to Rabshakeh; nor Jeremiah the prophet to Hananiah; nor Christ to the Scribes and Pharisees; and when an answer is returned, it should not be in his foolish way and manner, rendering evil for evil, and railing for railing, in the same virulent, lying, calumniating, and reproachful language;

lest thou also be like unto him; lest thou also, who art a man of understanding and sense, and hast passed for one among men, come under the same imputation, and be reckoned a fool like him.

Ver. 5. *Answer a fool according to his folly*, etc.] The Targum is,

“but speak with a fool in thy wisdom;”

and the Syriac version,

“yea, speak with a fool according to thy wisdom;”

which would at once remove the seeming contradiction in these words to the former, but then they are not a true version; indeed it is right, and must be the sense, that when a fool is answered, as it is sometimes necessary he should, that it be done in wisdom, and so as to expose his folly; he is to be answered and not answered according to different times, places, and circumstances, and manner of answering; he is to be answered when there is any hope of doing him good, or of doing good to others; or of preventing ill impressions being made upon others by what he has said; when the glory of God, the good of the church, and the cause of truth, require it; and when he would otherwise glory and triumph, as if his words or works were unanswerable, as follow;

lest he be wise in his own conceit; which fools are apt to be, and the rather when no answer is given them; imagining it arises from the strength of their arguments, and their nervous way of reasoning, when it is rather from a neglect and contempt of them.

Ver. 6. *He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool*, etc.] Who knows not how to deliver it in a proper manner, and is incapable of taking the answer, and reporting it as he should; or unfaithful in it, and brings a bad or false report, as the spies did upon the good land;

cutteth off the feet; he may as well cut off his feet before he sends him, or send a man without feet, as such an one; for prudence, diligence, and faithfulness in doing a message, and bringing back the answer, are as necessary to a messenger as his feet are;

[and] drinketh damage; to himself; his message not being rightly performed, and business not done well; which is a loss to the sender, as well as to his credit and reputation with the person to whom he sends him; he hereby concluding that he must be a man of no great judgment and sense to send such a fool on his errand. Such are the unskilful ambassadors of princes; and such are unfaithful ministers, the messengers of the churches; (see ³⁰⁰⁵Proverbs 10:26). The words in the original are three sentences, without a copulative, and stand in this order, “[he] that cutteth off feet; [he] that drinketh damage; [he] that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool”; that is, they are alike.

Ver. 7. *The legs of the lame are not equal*, etc.] Or as “the lifting up the legs by one that is lame”^{f710}, to dance to a pipe or violin, is very unseemly, and does but the more expose his infirmity, and can give no pleasure to others, but causes derision and contempt;

so [is] a parable in the mouth of fools; an apophthegm, or sententious expression of his own, which he delivers out as a wise saying, but is lame and halts; it is not consistent with itself, but like the legs of a lame man, one higher than the other: or one of the proverbs of this book, or rather any passage of Scripture, in the mouth of a wicked man; or any religious discourse of his is very unsuitable, since his life and conversation do not agree with it; it is as disagreeable to hear such a man talk of religious affairs as it is to see a lame man dance; or whose legs imitate buckets at a well, where one goes up and another down, as Gussetius^{f711} interprets the word.

Ver. 8. *As he that bindeth a stone in a sling*, etc.] That so fastens it to it that it cannot be slung out of it, it becomes useless and does not answer the end for which it is put there; or that places it there that it may be cast out, and is cast out, and so is thrown away, and of no more use; or that puts a precious stone, so some interpret it, in a heap of common stones, even in such a heap as is used at the stoning of malefactors; or increases the heap of stones on such, which the more exposes them, and the greater reproach they are loaded with; so the more a fool is praised, it does but bring to mind his folly, and issues in his greater disgrace, so Gussetius^{f712}: or rather it has respect to a precious stone put in such a heap of stones, as Luther; or else, according to Schultens, to such an one put into a heap of sepulchral stones; or, as Aben Ezra, that binds up a stone, a common stone, in purple, which to do is ridiculous, so R. Joseph Kimchi; the Vulgate Latin version renders it,

“as he that casts a stone to Mercury’s heap;”

a Heathen deity, called by the eastern people Mertholin and Margenah^{f713}, which last is near the same with the Hebrew word here used; whose statue was set up where two or more ways met, to direct travellers; and who therefore out of respect to the deity, and to show gratitude to him, used to cast a stone to the heap for the support of it; and which stones, set up in such doubtful places, were dedicated to him, and were called after his name^{f714}; and not only travellers did this in honour of the deity, and to make his statue more manifest^{f715}, but also for profit, to clear the way from

stones; and this custom obtained with the Indians, Arabs, Saracens, and now does with the Mahometans^{f716}: and such heaps of stones were also placed in cities, and at the doors of houses, in honour of Mercury, and were called from him Hermae^{f717}; these stones were also erected for borders of countries^{f718}. But it is not probable that this custom obtained in Solomon's time; and yet some Jewish writers interpret it to this sense, as if he that gives honour to a fool is like him that casts a stone to Mercury; and Jarchi in the text observes it as the sense of some of their Rabbins,

“that he that teacheth the law to a disciple that is not fit, is as he that casts a stone to Mercury;”

and to cast a stone to Mercury is with them the same as to commit idolatry^{f719}; but either of the former senses is best;

so [is] he that giveth honour to a fool; it is all thrown away and lost, as a stone out of a sling; or as unseemly as to put a precious stone among a heap of stones, or a common stone in purple; (see Gill on “~~200~~ Proverbs 26:1”).

Ver. 9. [*As] a thorn goeth up into the hand of a drunkard*, etc.] And he perceives it not; or being in his hand he makes an ill use of it, and hurts himself and others with it;

so [is] a parable in the mouth of fools, a proverbial sentence respecting religious matters; or a passage of holy Scripture which either he understands not, and has no spiritual perception of, any more than the drunkard has of the thorn in his hand; or which being used as a pun, or by way of jest, as it is the manner of some to pun upon or jest with the Scripture, hurts himself and others, wounds his own conscience, and ruins the souls of others; for it is dangerous meddling with edge tools, and hard to kick against the pricks; so to do is like a drunken man's handling thorns, which he does without judgment, and to his own prejudice and others. Gussetius^{f720} understands this of a fish hook coming up into the hand of a drunkard empty, without taking any thing by it, and so alike useless is what is said by a fool.

Ver. 10. *The great [God], that formed all [things]*, etc.] That made the heavens, earth, and sea, and all that are in them; who is great in the perfections of his nature, and in the works of his hands, and greatly to be praised;

both rewardeth the fool, and rewardeth transgressors; according to their works; every transgression of the law receiving its just recompence of reward, whether a man transgresses it ignorantly or wilfully; as his transgressions are, whether through error or presumption, so shall his punishment be; though some understand this, as Kimchi, of the Lord's doing good in a providential way, to the wise and unwise, the righteous and the wicked: the words are by some rendered to another sense, "a great one grieveth all, and he hireth the fool, and he hireth the transgressors"^{f721}; that is, a great man, a tyrannical prince, grieves all his good subjects; or, as Hottinger^{f722}, from the use of the word in the Arabic tongue, changes all things, inverts their order, or administers all at his will, that is, wrongly; when he hires fools and wicked men to do those bad things for him which others would not, to the great detriment of the commonwealth; and rewards them for it, putting them into posts of honour and trust, to the great grief and trouble of all his best subjects.

Ver. 11. *As a dog returneth to his vomit*, etc.] Who being sick with what he has eaten, casts it up again, and afterwards returns unto it and licks it up;

[so] a fool returneth to his folly, or "repeats"^{f723} it, time after time, many times, as Ben Melech; or a wicked man turns to his wickedness, who, having had some qualms upon his conscience for sin, for a while forsakes it; but that fit being over, and he forgetting all his former horror and uneasiness, returns to his old course of life: a wicked man is here compared to a dog, as he is elsewhere for his impudence and voraciousness in sinning; and the filthiness of sin is expressed by the vomit of a dog, than which nothing is more nauseous and loathsome; and the apostasy of the sinner, from an external course of righteousness into open profaneness is signified by the return of this creature to it. This is said to be a "true proverb", (⁶¹²²2 Peter 2:22), where it is quoted and applied.

Ver. 12. *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit*, etc.] Or "in his own eyes"^{f724}; as multitudes may be seen, by looking round; man is a creature but of small knowledge in things natural, civil, mechanical, philosophical, moral, or divine; yet greatly conceited for the most part of his knowledge and wisdom. As by a "fool" in this book is generally understood a wicked profane man, so by a wise man is meant a good and righteous man, and may be so understood here; and many there are who are good and righteous only their own conceit and esteem, not truly so; they place their

righteousness in outward things, in the observance of external duties; and though there may be some little imperfection in them, yet they think, as they mean well, God will accept the will for the deed: and some have imagined they have arrived to perfection; and such are generally conceited, proud, and haughty, and despise others; all which flows from ignorance; for, though they fancy themselves to be wise, they are very ignorant of themselves; of the plague of their own hearts; of the law of God, and the spirituality of it, and the extensiveness of its demands; of the strict justice and righteousness of God, which will not admit of an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect one; and also of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the nature and necessity of that to justify: and this being their case, they are in very dangerous circumstances; they are building on a sand; they are liable to fall into a ditch; they cannot be justified nor saved by their own works; they oppose themselves to God's way of justifying and saving sinners; and he sets himself against them, he resisteth the proud. Wherefore

[there is] more hope of a fool than of him; of a profane sinner than of a self-righteous person; for Christ came to save sinners, to call them to repentance, and he receives them as such; but not self-righteous persons; and, humanly speaking, there is a greater likelihood and greater hopes of convincing sinners, and bringing them to repentance and to forsake their sins, than there is of convincing a self-righteous man of the insufficiency of his righteousness, and the folly of trusting to it, and of bringing him to repent of such a confidence, and to forsake it; for it is most natural to him; it is his own, and the effect of great labour and pains; and encourages vanity and boasting, which would be excluded should he part with it; (see ~~4123~~ Matthew 21:31,32).

Ver. 13. *The slothful [man] saith,* etc.] Within himself; or to such that excite him to diligence and industry, to go about the business of his calling, to till his field, and dress his vineyard. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add, "being sent into the way"; ordered by his master to go out to work, when he makes the following excuse:

[there is] a lion in the way; a lion [is] in the streets; in the way to his field or vineyard, and in the streets, where his business lies or leads unto it: a very idle excuse this; since lions are usually in woods, forests, and desert places, and not in public roads, and much less in streets of cities; (see ~~4123~~ Proverbs 22:13). This may be applied to a man slothful in the duties of religion; the "way" and "streets" may denote public ordinances, which are

the ways of God's appointing, prescribing, and directing to; and in which good men walk, and find pleasure and profit; and are the streets where Wisdom cries, or Christ is preached, and where he is sought for and found: but many are the excuses some men make not to attend them; (see ²⁴⁷Luke 14:17-20); though they are vain, frivolous, and foolish, as this here; for in these ways and streets may true seen the feet of the messengers of peace; here the turtle's voice, the joyful sound of salvation by Christ, may be heard; here the Lamb of God is directed to, to be looked at, as taking away the sins of men, having been slain, and having shed his blood for the redemption of them: and though the terrible voice of the law may be sometimes heard, which is necessary to arouse and awaken sleepy sinners, and unhinge self-righteous persons from a dependence on the works of the law; yet, afterwards comes the still small voice of the Gospel, proclaiming freedom from the curse and condemnation of the law by Christ. Indeed, in some ages, there have been violent persecutors, comparable to lions; and informers have been in the way and in the streets, to terrify saints from their duty; but none of these could move them from it, nor separate fully gracious souls from their love to Christ: though carnal slothful professors are offended, when tribulation or persecution arise because of the word, these are lions to them; and, in times of peace and liberty, they can paint lions, very terrible to themselves, and raise such difficulties as are insuperable to them; a slight disorder of body, a small inclemency of the weather, little danger of catching cold, and the like, shall be a lion to them: not considering they have a devouring lion nearer them in their houses, chambers, and on their beds with them; even Satan, in whose clutches they are, who keeps their goods in peace, by whom they are led captive, and to whom they fall a prey: nor fearing the wrath of the King of kings, which is as the roaring of a lion: the wrath of God and of the Lamb, who is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and whose day of wrath will be such as none will be able to bear.

Ver. 14. [*As*] *the door turneth upon his hinges*, etc.] And moves this way and that way, and opens and shuts, and yet hangs where it did, is not moved from its place:

so [doth] the slothful upon his bed; he turns himself from side to side, but is still on his bed, and does not move out of it, and go about his business. Aben Ezra makes mention of another reading and sense, "the door turneth upon his hinges", and is opened to let men out, one and another, to his work; "but [yet] the slothful man [is] upon his bed"; though one and

another rise and go about business, and he hears the door open again and again, he stirs not, but keeps his, bed. So profane sinners lie on the bed of sinful lusts and sensual pleasures, indulge themselves in chambering and wantonness, and do not care to rise from hence, and walk honestly as in the daytime; and though their consciences are sometimes jogged by inward pricks, and they are moved a little by the reproofs of their friends, or awakened by the judgments of God; yet these are quickly over, and they give themselves a turn and go to sleep again: sometimes there are some motions in them, some thoughts and resolutions of amendment, some purposes to do good works; but, alas! their slothfulness is so great, and the habits and customs of sin so strong, that they cannot break through them, shake off their sloth, and come out, but remain as they were: and so it is with carnal professors, resting in their own works, and in a round of duties; and after ten, twenty, thirty years' profession, or more, they are just where they were; have no spiritual knowledge, judgment, and experience.

Ver. 15. *The slothful hideth his hand in [his] bosom*, etc.] To keep it warm; Jarchi's note is,

“he puts his hand in a hot basin, because of the cold.”

The word^{f725} for “bosom” does sometimes signify a “pot” or basin. Or he hides it under his “arm holes”, as some render it, not caring to make use of it for labour; or covers it out of sight in his bosom, pretending some weakness or ailment in it, which hinders him from working; (see ~~20924~~ Proverbs 19:24);

it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth; from under his arm holes, or out of his bosom, or even out of the platter, where his food is; an hyperbolical expression, setting forth his excessive sloth; and such an one ought not to eat, but starve indeed. It may be rendered, “he is weary”; it is a “weariness”^{f726} to him; it is even a labour too much for him to feed himself, so great is his sloth: and such is the sloth of carnal men; it is a weariness to them to hear the word, and attend on ordinances, and to lift up their hands in prayer to God; or to make use of any means, that they may have food for their souls; praying, hearing, and reading, are a burden to them; and therefore it is but just with God to send them a famine of the word, and take away the whole stay and staff of bread and water.

Ver. 16. *The sluggard [is] wiser in his own conceit*, etc.] It is a sort of a solecism, a kind of a contradiction in terms for a sluggard to be wise, who

is so slothful as to make no use of the means of getting wisdom and knowledge. And it must be a mere conceit in him that he is wise, and especially that he is wiser

than seven men that can render a reason; not alluding to the number of a king's counsellors, who return him an answer to what he inquires of them, as Aben Ezra thinks; such as were the "seven" princes of the king of Persia, (^{CH}Esther 1:14). Since to have such an exact number might not obtain in Solomon's time, either in Persia, or in his own court, or elsewhere: but it signifies a large number, many wise men, as Gersom observes, that render a reason to everyone that asks it of them; who, having been diligent and industrious, have got such a competency of knowledge, that they are able to give a proper reason of what they say, believe, or do: and such are they, who, by the blessing of grace in the use of means, are wise in a spiritual sense; know themselves, and Christ Jesus, and the way of salvation by him; have an understanding of the Scriptures, and of the doctrines of the Gospel; have their spiritual senses exercised, to discern between truth and error; are of established judgments, and capable of teaching others good judgment and knowledge; and of giving a reason of their faith, hope, and practice; (see ^{CH}1 Peter 3:15). Now such is the conceit of an ignorant sluggard, that he is wiser than ten thousand or ever so many of these; he thinks himself the wisest man, inasmuch as he enjoys ease and quiet in his stupid sottish way, while they are toiling and labouring, and taking a great deal of pains to get knowledge; and that he sleeps in a whole skin, and escapes the censure and reproaches of men, which they endure for being precise in religious duties, and constant in the performance of them; and fancies he can get to heaven in an easier way, without all this care and toil and trouble, only by saying, Lord, have mercy on me, at last.

Ver. 17. *He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife [belonging] not to him*, etc.] One that going along the streets, and passing by the door, where two or more persons are quarrelling, and he thrusts himself in and intermeddles in the affair he has no concern in; and interests himself in the cause of the quarrel he has nothing to do with, on account of acquaintance, relation, or office; and especially when, instead of being a mediator and peacemaker, he takes on one side, and acts the angry part, as Aben Ezra interprets the word rendered "meddleth"; blows things up into a greater flame, and enrages the one against the other. Such a man

[is like] one that taketh a dog by the ears; which are short, and difficult to be held, and tender; and therefore cannot bear to be held by them, especially to be pulled and lugged by them, and which is very provoking; and as such a man has work enough to do to hold him, so he is in danger of being bitten by him, at least when he is forced to let go his hold: and so it is with a man that interferes in a quarrel in a furious manner; it is much if one or other of the contending parties do not fall upon him and abuse him. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “as he that holdeth the tail of a dog.”

Ver. 18. *As a mad [man], who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death.*] Or the instruments of death, as Aben Ezra; or the sharp arrows of death, as the Targum and Syriac version; who casts firebrands into the houses and barns of his neighbours, to consume them; or arrows at their persons and cattle, to destroy them; or any other instruments of death, which none but a mad man, or one wickedly mad, would do. Or, “as one that makes himself mad”^{f727}; that feigns himself mad, and, under colour of this, does mischief to his neighbour’s person and property: or, “as one that hides himself”^{f728}; that casts firebrands, arrows, and other deadly things, in a private way, so as not to be seen, and that it may not be known from whence they come: or, “as one that wearies himself”^{f729}, so Jarchi; in doing mischief in such a way. The word in the Arabic language signifies to play and be in sport; and so it means one that does these things in sport, as it is a sport to a fool to do mischief; which sense agrees with what follows.

Ver. 19. *So [is] the man [that] deceiveth his neighbour*, etc.] By telling him a lie; or by reporting false things concerning him; or by cheating him in trade and commerce; or by taking his goods privately from him; and, when caught in either of these,

and saith, Amos not I in sport? do not be angry, I designed no hurt; it is all in jest, a mere joke: but, had he not been apprehended, it would have been in earnest, as he was. This is only an excuse, and as absurd an one as if a man should set fire to his neighbour’s house and barns, or throw arrows at him, or strike him with any instrument of death, as the sword, etc. and then say he was only in jest, or pretend madness.

Ver. 20. *Where no wood is, [there] the fire goeth out*, etc.] Or “woods”^{f730}; where there is a large quantity of wood or fuel, the fire is kept up; but where there is little, scarce any or none at all, it goes out of course;

So where [there is] no talebearer, the strife ceaseth; or is silent^{f731}: men cease to quarrel one with another; they hold their peace and are silent, when there are none to bring tales from one to another, or any whisperer or backbiter to suggest evil things of each other; or when such are discouraged on both sides, and their tales are not listened to; or when they are detected and thrust out of doors, as they deserve, then strife subsides, and peace ensues. Contention is like a fire, the flame of which is blown up by talebearers and whisperers, who are as incendiaries, and as such are to be treated.

Ver. 21. *As coals [are] to burning coals, and wood to fire,* etc.] As brands, wood half burnt, or dead coals put to live and burning ones, soon take fire and become like them, and fit and proper fuel for them, and add to their heat:

so [is] a contentious man to kindle strife; or “a man of contentions”^{f732}; who is given to it, is full of it; it is agreeable to his natural temper and disposition; he is in his element when at it; such a man is as fuel to the fire, as a dead coal to a living one, which increases the heat of it; so does he, he kindles and spreads the flame of contention and strife.

Ver. 22. *The words of a talebearer [are] as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.*] These expressions are the same with those in (^{Q1808}Proverbs 18:8); and are here repeated, as being found along with others by the men of Hezekiah, (^{Q2016}Proverbs 25:1); as some others likewise are; and also because of the importance of them; and to impress the minds of men with a sense of the evil of such a practice, that they may shun it, and avoid those that are given to it. (See Gill on “^{Q1808}Proverbs 18:8”).

Ver. 23. *Burning lips, and a wicked heart,* etc.] Either burning with wrath and malice; breathing out threatenings and slaughter; pursuing men with reproaches and slanders, arising from a wicked heart: or rather, burning with profession of love to God, and affection to good men; with great pretensions of kindness, and promises of good things, when their hearts are wicked, and they design noticing less; say one thing with their lips, with the greatest show of affection and sincerity, and mean another in their hearts. These

[are like] a potsherd covered with silver dross: which at a distance, or to less discerning persons, looks like silver, and is taken for it; when the

covering is only dross, and what is within is only a potsherd, Or a piece of an earthen vessel, good for nothing: such are the specious professions and deceitful words, which flow from a wicked heart.

Ver. 24. *He that hateth dissembleth with his lips*, etc.] He that bears a grudge in his mind, and retains hatred in his heart against any person, hides it all he can, till he has an opportunity of showing it as he would; he pretends a great deal of friendship with his lips, that his hatred might not be known; he would be thought to be a friend, when he is really an enemy; he does not choose as yet to make himself known what he is. Some render it to a sense the reverse, “the enemy”, or “he that hateth, is known by his lips”^{f733}; so the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions: if you carefully watch him, mark his words, and observe what he says, you will find out the hatred that lies in his heart; he cannot forbear saying something, at one time or another, which betrays the malignity of his mind;

and layeth up deceit within him; or, “though^{f734} he layeth up”, etc. hides it as much as he can, yet it will show itself in some way or another.

Ver. 25. *When he speaketh fair, believe him not*, etc.] Gives good words, flatters with his lips, pretends great kindness and favour, expresses himself in a very gracious and amiable manner, in order to gain attention and respect; or when he delivers himself in a submissive and suppliant way, with great humility and deference; or in a mournful and pitiful strain, as if he had the most tender affection and concern; be not too credulous; do not suffer yourselves to be imposed upon by him; be upon your guard, distrust him, suspect a snake in the grass;

for [there are] seven abominations in his heart; a multitude of wicked purposes, schemes, and designs, which he has formed there against you, and which he only waits a proper time to put in execution; things abominable to God and men. Aben Ezra thinks reference is had to the seven abominations in (²¹¹⁶Proverbs 6:16).

Ver. 26. *[Whose] hatred is covered by deceit*, etc.] The hatred of whose heart is covered by deceitful words, and strong expressions of love and esteem; so that those to whom they are made are deceived by them. Or, whose “hatred is covered in a waste or desert place”^{f735}; it being not seen; as what is done in desert places is not obvious to view, being little frequented; which agrees with what follows, and keeps up the antithesis

between the two clauses: Schultens renders it, with a tumultuous noise, with loud and public acclamations; (see ^{<3847>}Zechariah 4:7);

his wickedness shall be showed before the [whole] congregation; in an open court of judicature, where he shall be brought, arraigned, and tried for his wickedness; which, though covertly done, shall be exposed and proved upon him: or before the church of God, where he shall be convicted by the word, and be obliged to acknowledge his sin; and, in a member, be reprov'd before all, and rejected: or however, at the great day of judgment, before angels and men, when all will be convened together; and where every secret work will be brought, and will be brought to light, and receive its just reward.

Ver. 27. *Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein*, etc.] That devises mischief against others, it shall come upon himself. The allusion is to the digging of pits for catching wild beasts, which are slightly covered with earth; and which sometimes the pursuers, through inadvertency, fall into themselves; the passage seems to be taken from (^{<3975>}Psalm 7:15,16);

and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him; that rolls a stone up hill, if he does not take care, it will return back, and fall with great force upon himself; so the mischief which a wicked man labours hard at, as men do in digging a pit, or rolling a stone, in time rolls back upon themselves; the measure they mete out to others is measured to them. Jarchi makes mention of an “hagadah”, or exposition, which illustrates this passage, by the case of Abimelech; who slew threescore and ten persons on one stone, and was himself killed with a piece of a millstone cast upon him, (^{<4098>}Judges 9:18,53); this may put in mind of the fable of Sisyphus^{f736}, feigned in hell to roll a great stone to the top of a mountain, which presently falling down on his head, made his labour fruitless.

Ver. 28. *A lying tongue hateth [those that are] afflicted by it*, etc.] That is, a man of a lying tongue, that is given to lying, hates those that are hurt and crushed by his lies; the reason why he hurts them with his lies is because he hates them; and, having hurt them, he hates them, being made his enemies, and from whom he may expect and be in fear of revenge: moreover, he hates those that are troubled at and disturbed with his lies; or the “contrite”^{f737} and humble men: or those who “smite” or “strike”^{f738} him, as some render the word, actively; that is, reprove him, and bring him to shame for lying. The words are by some translated, a “contrite” person, or everyone of “the contrite ones, hateth a lying tongue”^{f739}; such as are of a

broken and of a contrite spirit, and that tremble at the word of God, or are hurt by lies, these abhor a liar. The Targum is,

“a lying tongue bates the ways of truth;”

and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, “a lying tongue hate truth”; and so the Vulgate Latin version, “a lying tongue loves not truth”; for nothing is more contrary to a lie than truth;

and a flattering mouth worketh ruin; both to itself and to the persons flattered by it: or, “makes an impulse”¹⁷⁴⁰; a pushing, a driving away; it drives away such as cannot bear its flatteries: and pushes on such that are taken with it, both into sin and into ruin.

CHAPTER 27

Ver. 1. *Boast not thyself of tomorrow*, etc.] Or, “of tomorrow day”,^{f741}. Either of having a tomorrow, or of any future time; no man can assure himself of more than the present time; for, however desirable long life is, none can be certain of it; so says the poet^{f742}: for though there is a common term of man’s life, threescore years and ten, yet no one can be sure of arriving to it; and, though there may be a human probability of long life, in some persons of hale and strong constitutions, yet there is no certainty, since life is so frail a thing; the breath of man is in his nostrils, which is soon and easily stopped; his life is but as a vapour, which appears for a little while, and then vanishes away; all flesh is as grass, which in the morning flourishes, in the evening is cut down, and on the morrow is cast into the oven: man is like a flower, gay and beautiful for a season, but a wind, an easterly blasting wind, passes over it, and it is gone; his days are as a shadow that declineth towards the evening; they are as a hand’s breadth; yea, his age is as nothing before the Lord. Death is certain to all men, as the fruit of sin, by the appointment of God; and there is a certain time fixed for it, which cannot be exceeded; but of that day and hour no man knows; and therefore cannot boast of a moment of future time, or of a tomorrow, nor of what he shall enjoy on the morrow^{f743}; for, what he has today he cannot be certain he shall have the next; he cannot assure himself of health and honour, of pleasures, riches, and friends; he may have health today, and sickness tomorrow; be in honour today, and in disgrace on the morrow: he may bid his soul eat, drink, and be merry, seeing he has much goods laid up for many years, and vainly say, tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant, when this night his soul may be required of him; he may have his wife and children, friends and relations, about him now, and before another day comes be stripped of them all; he may be in great affluence, and gave great substance for the present, and in a short time all may be taken from him, as Job’s was; riches are uncertain things, they make themselves wings and flee away. Nor should a man boast of what he will do on the morrow; either in civil things, in trade and business; to which the Apostle James applies this passage, (^{S0413}James 4:13-16); or in acts of charity, so Aben Ezra explains it, boast not of an alms deed to be done tomorrow; whatever a man finds to be his duty to do in this respect, he should do it at once, while he has an opportunity: or in things religious;

as that he will repent of his sins, and amend his life on the morrow; that he will attend the means of grace, hear the Gospel, the voice of Christ; all which should be to day, and not be put off till tomorrow. Nor should true believers procrastinate the profession of their faith; nor should any duty, or exercise of religion, be postponed to another season; but men should work while it is day, and always abound in the work of the Lord, and be found so doing; (see ^{<2562>}Isaiah 56:12 ^{<2179>}Luke 12:19,20);

for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth; time is like a teeming woman, to which the allusion is, big with something; but what that is is not known till brought forth: as a woman, big with child, knows not what she shall bring forth till the time comes, whether a son or a daughter, a dead or a living child; so the events of time, or what is in the womb of time, are not known till brought forth; these are the secret things which belong to God, which he keeps in his own breast; the times and seasons of things are only in his power, (^{<4006>}Acts 1:6). We know not what the present day, as the Targum renders it, will bring forth; and still less what tomorrow will do, what changes it will produce in our circumstances, in our bodies and in our minds; so that we cannot be certain what we shall be, what we shall have, or what we shall do, on the morrow, even provided we have one.

Ver. 2. *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth*, etc.] Men should do those things which are praiseworthy; and should do them openly, that they may be seen and praised for them: for it is honourable to have such a character as Demetrius had, who had a good report of all men; and as the brother had, whose praise in the Gospel was in all the churches. To be commended by others, by any but a man's self, is to his credit and reputation; but nothing more hurtful to it than self-commendation; (see ^{<4708>}2 Corinthians 10:18); in some cases it is right for a man indeed to commend himself, when the glory of God, the credit of religion, the cause of truth and self-vindication, require it; as the prophet Samuel, the Apostle Paul, and others, have been obliged to do, (^{<923>}1 Samuel 12:3 ^{<4112>}2 Corinthians 11:12), etc.

a stranger, and not thine own lips; a stranger means any other than a man's self; and if it is one that he knows not, or has little acquaintance with; or if a foreigner, that does not personally know him, only has good testimonies of him, or has read his works; and especially if in other respects an enemy; it is greatly to his honour to be praised by him: and such a

commendation comes with much better grace than from himself, and from whom indeed it would not come with any.

Ver. 3. *A stone [is] heavy, and the sand weighty*, etc.] As was the stone which was at the well's mouth, where Laban's flocks were watered, which could not be rolled away till all the shepherds were gathered together, (^{<QBP>}Genesis 29:2,3,8); and like the burdensome stone Jerusalem is compared to (^{<SIBT>}Zechariah 12:3); and as that at the sepulchre of Christ, rolled away by the angel, (^{<ABP>}Matthew 28:2). And sand is a very ponderous thing; difficult to be carried, as the Septuagint render it, as a bag of it is; and to which heavy afflictions are sometimes compared, (^{<RHP>}Job 6:2,3);

but a fool's wrath [is] heavier than them both; it cannot be removed, it rests in his bosom; it is sometimes intolerable to himself; he sinks and dies under the weight of it, as Nabal did: "wrath killeth the foolish man", (^{<RHP>}Job 5:2); and it is still more intolerable to others, as Nebuchadnezzar's wrath and his fiery furnace were.

Ver. 4. *Wrath [is] cruel, and anger [is] outrageous*, etc.] Or "an inundation"^{f744}; it is like the breaking in of the sea, or a flood of mighty waters, which know no bounds, and there is no stopping them: so cruel and outrageous were the wrath and anger of Simeon and Levi, in destroying the Shechemites; of Pharaoh, in making the Israelites to serve with hard bondage, and ordering their male children to be killed and drowned; and of Herod, in murdering the infants in and about Bethlehem;

but who [is] able to stand before envy? which is secret in a man's heart, and privately contrives and works the ruin of another, and against which there no guarding. All mankind in Adam fell before the envy of Satan; for it was through the envy of the devil that sin and death came into the world, in the Apocrypha:

"Nevertheless through envy of the devil came death into the world: and they that do hold of his side do find it." (Wisdom 2:24)

Abel could not stand before the envy of Cain; nor Joseph before the envy of his brethren; nor Christ before the envy of the Jews, his bitter enemies; and, where it is, there is confusion and every evil work, (^{<SIB4>}James 3:14,16). An envious man is worse than an angry and wrathful man; his wrath and anger may be soon over, or there may be ways and means of appeasing him; but envy continues and abides, and works insensibly.

Ver. 5. *Open rebuke [is] better than secret love.*] This is to be understood, not of rebuke publicly given; though Aben Ezra thinks public reproof is meant, which, arising from love, is better than that which is done in secret, though in love, as being more effectual; for rebuke among friends should be given privately, according to our Lord's direction, (^{<A0815>}Matthew 18:15); but it signifies reproof given faithfully and plainly, with openness of heart, and without mincing the matter, and palliating the offence; but speaking out freely, and faithfully laying before a person the evil of his sin, in all the circumstances of it, as the Apostle Paul did to Peter, when he withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed, (^{<A0811>}Galatians 2:11). Now such kind of reproof is better than such love to a person as will not suffer him to tell him of his faults, for fear of grieving him, or losing his friendship; or than such love as does not show itself in deeds, and particularly in faithful reproofs; for so to act is to hate a person, and suffer sin to be upon him, (^{<A0817>}Leviticus 19:17).

Ver. 6. *Faithful [are] the wounds of a friend,* etc.] That is, friendly reproofs; which, though they may be severe, at least thought so, and may grieve and wound, and cause pain and uneasiness for the present, yet, proceeding from a spirit of love, faithfulness, and integrity, and designed for the good of the person reproofed, ought to be kindly received; (see ^{<A0815>}Psalm 141:5);

but the kisses of an enemy [are] deceitful; flow from a deceitful heart, and not to be confided in, as the kisses of Joab and Judas. It may be rather rendered, "are to be deprecated"^{f745}; prayed against, as real evils, hurtful and pernicious; and so the Targum renders it, "are evil". Good is the advice of Isocrates^{f746},

"reckon them faithful, not who praise everything thou sayest or doest, but those that reprove what is amiss."

Ver. 7. *The full soul loatheth an honeycomb,* etc.] Or "tramples upon" it^{f747}, as the word signifies, and most versions render it, expressive of contempt and abhorrence; and suits will the situation of the honeycomb, which was usually in trees and rocks in Palestine: and so might drop from thence, and be trampled upon by passengers; and especially such as are here described, whose appetites have been sated with dainties, and their stomachs heave at the most delicious food. Jarchi interprets this of one that has no desire after the doctrines of the law; and so the senses of it are not esteemed by him; whereas he that has a desire for it, even the things which

come to him with bitterness and labour are sweet to him. But it may be better applied to a self-sufficient man, that is full of himself: of his own wisdom and knowledge in divine things; of his strength, and the power of his free will; of his purity, holiness, goodness, and righteousness; who loathes the Gospel, comparable to the honeycomb for its sweetness; (see ~~20161~~ Proverbs 16:24); it being disagreeable to his taste, and as insipid as the white of an egg to him; and as being against him, which makes him out an arrant fool, blows a blast on all his goodness and goodliness, strips the creature of his righteousness, and excludes boasting;

but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet; that is in want of provision, has an appetite for it; anything, though ever so mean and disrelishing to others, is sweet to such an one; as was barley bread to Artaxerxes king of Persia, and country bread made of bran to Ptolemy Lagus king of Egypt, when in great distress for food^{f748}: Seneca says^{f749}, hunger will make bad bread fine food. And so is the Gospel, and every doctrine of it, to a sensible sinner; that is in want, and knows its wants, and has desires after spiritual things created in it; hungers and thirsts after the word and ordinances; after Christ, the bread of life; after the blessings of grace in him; particularly after the pardon of sin, and justifying righteousness and salvation by him; and after more knowledge of him, and communion with him. Now, though, here is nothing bitter in the Gospel, properly speaking, as in the law; yet, that which is bitter to others, and had been bitter to the above persons, is now sweet, and which are disagreeable to the flesh; as the denial of sinful, civil, and righteous self, which the Gospel teaches; and even that which is the most contemptible to men; as the preaching of the cross, or the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ; the doctrines of electing grace, imputed righteousness, the satisfaction of Christ, etc. How sweet are these to the taste of a hungry soul! and even though they are attended with bitter afflictions, the reproaches, revilings, and persecutions of men; as the paschal lamb, a type of Christ, was eaten with bitter herbs. This may also be applied to the hearing of the word; where and when there is plenty of means, men grow weary of the word, sick of it, and surfeit upon it and loath it; or, however, are very curious and nice, and cannot take up with plain preaching, but must have something suited to their palate, dressed up in a very elegant manner: but when the word of the Lord is precious or rare, and where there are few opportunities of hearing it, sensible souls, that have spiritual

appetites, are glad of it; and it is sweet unto them, though not so nicely dressed and though brought to them in a homely manner.

Ver. 8. *As a bird that wandereth from her nest*, etc.] To seek for food for herself and her young; or that leaves it without returning to it, and so her eggs or her young are exposed, and she herself liable to fall into the hands of birds of prey, or of the fowler, when she would be safe in her nest; as there was a law in Israel in her favour, (⁴⁶²¹⁶Deuteronomy 22:6); or as one that is forced out and obliged to wander from place to place, (²³¹⁴²Isaiah 16:2);

so [is] a man that wandereth from his place; who, in time of famine and distress, goes into other parts for bread, as Jacob's sons went down into Egypt; and such are they in a spiritual sense who leave all, and follow Christ for food for their souls; or who are forced to flee from place to place, and wander about in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, because of the persecution of their enemies; or rather it is to be taken in an ill sense and applied to such who abide not in the calling whereunto they are called; dislike, and are unsatisfied with, their present business of life, and seek new employments, which oftentimes is to the hurt and detriment of themselves and families; and also to such who wander from the way of spiritual understanding, from the place of divine worship, from the word, ordinances, and commandments of the Lord; (see ³¹²¹⁶Proverbs 21:16).

Ver. 9. *Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart*, etc.] Meaning not the holy anointing oil for sacred use, or the perfume or incense offered on the altar of incense; but common oil or ointment used at entertainments, poured on the heads of the guests; and incense in censuring of rooms, which were very delightful, pleased the senses, and so exhilarated the heart;

so [doth] the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel; so the sweet and pleasant words, the wise and cordial counsel of a man's friend, rejoice his heart; he takes it well, he is highly delighted with it; he receives it kindly, and pursues it to advantage; or "by counsel of soul"¹⁷⁵⁰, such as relates to the welfare of the soul here and hereafter; such is the counsel Christ gives, to buy of him gold tried in the fire, white raiment eye salve; and such as the Scriptures give, which, with the saints, are the men of their counsel, as they were David's; and which ministers of the Gospel give, who are therefore like ointment and perfume, "a sweet savour of life unto life": some render the words, and they will bear it, "so the sweetness of a

man's friend, more than the counsel of his soul"^{f751} or than his own; that is, the sweet counsel of a friend is better than his own, and more rejoices his heart, and gives him more pleasure than that does; and this way go the Jewish commentators.

Ver. 10. *Thine own friend, and thy father's friend forsake not*, etc.] Who have been long tried and proved, and found faithful; these should be kept to and valued, and not new ones sought; which to do is oftentimes of bad consequence. Solomon valued his father's friend Hiram, and kept up friendship with him; but Rehoboam his son forsook the counsel of the old men his father's friends and counsellors, and followed the young men his new friends, and thereby lost ten tribes at once. Jarchi interprets this of God, the friend of Israel and of their fathers, who is not to be forsaken, and is a friend that loves at all times; and to forsake him is to forsake the fountain of living waters;

neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity; poverty and distress, to tell him thy case, expecting sympathy relief, and succour from him; but rather go to thy friend and father's friend, who sticks closer than a brother; (see ^{<2082>}Proverbs 18:24);

[for] better is a neighbour [that is] near than a brother far off: a neighbour that is a fast and faithful friend, and who is not only near as to place but as to affections is more serviceable and, useful to a man in time of distress than a brother though near in blood, yet as far off in place, so much more in affection, and from whom a man can promise nothing, and little is to be expected. The phrase in the preceding clause signifies a cloudy day, and such a day of distress through poverty is; in which sense it is used by Latin^{f752} writers, when a man is alone, and former friends care not to come nigh him.

Ver. 11. *My son, be wise, and make my heart glad*, etc.] That is, show thyself to be a wise man by thy words and actions; endeavour to get a good share of wisdom and knowledge, and make a good use of it, and that will rejoice my heart; as nothing more gladdens the heart of a parent than the wisdom and prudent behaviour of his son; see (^{<2000>}Proverbs 10:1 23:15,24,25);

that I may answer him that reproacheth me; with begetting a foolish son, or a wicked man; or making him such by ill examples; or through neglect of education; or by using too much severity in it.

Ver. 12. *A prudent [man] foreseeth the evil,* etc.] (See Gill on “^{412B}Proverbs 22:3”); or “seeth the evil”^{f753}; the evil of sin, as it is contrary to the nature, will, and law and abominable in his sight; and not only the evil of gross actions of sin, but of indwelling lust; and such an one, who is wise to that which is good, sees the sad work sin has made in the world, and in himself; how it has defaced the image of God in man, stripped him of his righteousness, and defiled all the powers and faculties of his soul; upon which sight of it he is filled with shame, reflects upon himself for his past conduct, loathes sin, and himself for it, repents of it, confesses and forsakes it: he likewise sees the evil of punishment for sin, the just demerit of it, the curse of the law, the wrath of God, the second and eternal death, a separation from God, a sense and feeling of divine vengeance, anguish, and distress intolerable, and that for ever;

[and] hideth himself; not in secret places, that he may not be seen by the Lord; nor in his own works of righteousness, to secure him from the wrath of God: nor is it to he understood of his hiding himself from sinners and their company, and so escaping the pollutions of the world; but of his betaking himself to Christ, who is the city of refuge, the stronghold, the rock, in the clefts of which the people of God hide themselves; even in his wounds, or in him as a suffering crucified Saviour, and who is the hiding place from the wind, and covert from the storm of divine wrath; such are redemption by him, his sacrifice and satisfaction, his blood and righteousness, and intercession; see (^{231D}Isaiah 32:2); also (see Gill on “^{412B}Proverbs 22:3”);

[but] the simple pass on, [and] are punished; such who are thoughtless and foolish, have no sight nor sense of sin and danger, go on in their sinful course of life without any care or concern, without any fear or dread, till their feet stumble on the dark mountains of eternity; and they fall into the bottomless pit of perdition, from whence there is no recovery.

Ver. 13. *Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.*] (See Gill on “^{411G}Proverbs 20:16”), where the same proverb is, and is expressed in the same words as here.

Ver. 14. *He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice,* etc.] So as not only to be heard by him, but by others; who is extravagant in his praises and commendations of him; who exceeds all bounds of modesty, truth, and decency; who affects pompous words, and hyperbolical expressions; and

shows himself to be a real sycophant and flatterer, having some sinister end to serve by it;

rising early in the morning; lest any should be before him, and get the benefit he seeks by his flattery; or as if he had not time enough in the day to finish his encomium, unless he began early in the morning, and continued it all the day; and so it denotes his being incessant at this work, always harping on this string, or expressing himself in this adulatory way; or, as some think, this is mentioned as an aggravation of his sin, that he should be acting this low, mean, and criminal part, when he should be employed in devotion and prayer to God;

it shall be counted a curse to him; either to the flatterer, by his friend whom he blesses, and by all wise men that hear him, who will despise him all one as if he cursed him: the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it to this sense, that such an one nothing differs, or nothing seems to differ, from one that curses: or else to the person blessed, whom others will curse or however detract from his character, because of the profuse praises bestowed upon him; nay, sometimes God himself curses such a man, who listens to, is fond of, and receives the fulsome flatteries of wicked men, as in the case of Herod, (^{<4122>}Acts 12:22,23).

Ver. 15. *A continual dropping in a very rainy day*, etc.] That is, through the roof of a house which is not well covered, or which lets in rain by one means or another; so that in a thorough rainy day it keeps continually dropping, to the great annoyance of those within, and which is very uncomfortable to them: it is observed^{f754} that rain is called by the name in the text, because a man is shut up under a roof falls; and continuing long he is shut up within doors and cannot come out;

and a contentious woman are alike; troublesome and uncomfortable; as in a rainy day, a man cannot go abroad with any pleasure, and if the rain is continually dropping upon him in his house he cannot sit there with any comfort; and so a contentious woman, that is always scolding and brawling, a man has no comfort at home; and if he goes abroad he is jeered and laughed at on her account by others; and perhaps she the more severely falls upon him when he returns for having been abroad; (see ^{<2193>}Proverbs 19:13).

Ver. 16. *Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind*, etc.] Whoever attempts to stop her brawls and contentions, to repress and restrain them, and hinder

her voice being heard in the streets, and endeavours to hide the shame that comes upon herself and family, attempts a thing as impossible as to hide the wind in the palm of a man's hand, or to stop it from blowing; for as that, by being restrained or pent up by any methods that can be used, makes the greater noise, so, by all the means that are used to still a contentious woman, she is but the more noisy and clamorous, and becomes more shameful and infamous;

and the ointment of his right hand, [which] bewrayeth [itself]: or “will call” or “calls”^{f755}, and says, in effect, Here am I; for the smell of it, which cannot be hid when held in a man's hand, betrays it; and the faster he holds it, and the more he presses and squeezes it, and the more it is heated hereby, the more it diffuses its savour, and is known to be where it is; and so all attempts to stop the mouth of a brawling woman does but cause her to brawl the louder.

Ver. 17. *Iron sharpeneth iron*, etc.] A sword or knife made of iron is sharpened by it; so butchers sharpen their knives;

so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend; by conversation with him; thus learned men sharpen one another's minds, and excite each other to learned studies; Christians sharpen one another's graces, or stir up each other to the exercise of them, and the gifts which are bestowed on them, and to love and to good works. So Jarchi and Gersom understand it of the sharpening of men's minds to the learning of doctrine; but Aben Ezra, takes it in an ill sense, that as iron strikes iron and sharpens it, so a wrathful man irritates and provokes wrath in another. Some render the words, “as iron delighteth in iron, so a man rejoiceth the countenance of his friend”;^{f756} by his company and conversation.

Ver. 18. *Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof*, etc.] That takes care of a fig tree, either his own or another's, planted in his garden or vineyard; (see ^{<4136>}Luke 13:6); who cultivates it, digs about and dungs it, and prunes it, and does everything necessary to it; when it brings forth fruit, and that is ripe and fit to eat, he eats of it, as it is but just he should; (see ^{<4197>}1 Corinthians 9:7);

so he that waiteth on his master; or “that keeps his master”^{f757}, his person from danger, and his goods faithfully committed to his trust; or “that observes his master”^{f758}, that looks to his hand, observes his motions, directions, and commands;

shall be honoured; as Joseph was in Potiphar's house, and elsewhere; and as all those are who observe the commandments of God, and are the servants of Christ; (see ^{<0120>}1 Samuel 2:30 ^{<0126>}John 12:26).

Ver. 19. *As in water face [answereth] to face*, etc.] As water is as a looking glass, in which a man may behold his own face and another's; or as the face in the water answers to the face of a man, and there is a great likeness between them. All things through water appear greater, as Seneca^{f759} observes, and so more clear and plain;

so the heart of man to man; one man's heart may be seen and discerned in some measure by another, as by his countenance; for though, as the poet^{f760} says, "frontis nulla fides", yet the countenance is often the index of the mind, though not an infallible one; wrath and anger in the breast may be seen in the face, as were in Cain's; thus Jacob saw some resentment at him in the mind of Laban, and judged he had some design of mischief against him by the change of his countenance; also what is in the heart of man is discerned by what comes out of it, by his words, and also by his actions; yea, a man may know in a good measure what is in another man's heart, by what he finds in his own: the word of God is a glass, or medium of vision, and like water, in which a man's face is seen, through which a man sees his own heart; the law is a glass, in which an enlightened person sees not only the perfections of God, the nature of righteousness, but also his sin, and the sinfulness of it; this glass neither magnifies nor multiplies his sins, but sets them in a true light before him, by which he discerns heart sins, and sees and knows the plague of his heart; and the Gospel is a glass, wherein he beholds the glory of Christ, sees and can discern whether Christ is formed in him, and he has the grace of the Spirit of God wrought in his soul, as faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, self-denial, etc. moreover, as the face seen in the water is similar to a man's face, so the hearts of men are alike, not merely in a natural sense, see (^{<0315>}Psalm 33:15); but in a moral and spiritual sense the hearts of unregenerate men are alike, and answer to each other; for they are all equally corrupted, one and depraved; the heart of every man is desperately wicked; the imaginations of the thoughts of the hearts or wicked men, one and all of them, are only evil, and that continually; their affections are inordinately the same, they love and hate the same persons and things; their minds and consciences are all defiled; their understandings are darkened; their wills are averse to that which is good, and bent on that which is evil: and so the hearts of good men are alike; they have all one heart and one way given them; their experiences

agree as to the work of grace and conversion; they are all made sensible of sin, the evil of it, and danger by it; they are all brought off of their own righteousness, and are led to Christ to depend on him alone for righteousness, pardon, and eternal life; they are partakers of the same promises in the Gospel, and have the same enemies to grapple with, and the same temptations, trials, and exercises from sin, Satan, and the world; and they have the same things put into their hearts, the laws of God, the doctrines of Christ, and the several graces of the Spirit of Christ; so that there cannot be a greater likeness between a man's face and that seen in the water, than there is between the heart of one saint and another; the hearts of Old and New Testament saints, and of all in all ages and places, answer to one another. The Targum paraphrases it to a sense quite the reverse,

“as waters and as faces which are not like one to another, so the hearts of the children of men are not like one to another;”

and to the same sense are the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Ver. 20. *Hell and destruction are never full*, etc.] The grave, as the word used often signifies; and which may be called “destruction”, because bodies laid in it are soon corrupted and destroyed; and though bodies are cast into it and devoured by it, it is ready for more; it is one of the four things which never have enough. The place where Gog is said to be buried is called Hamongog, the multitude of Gog, (²³⁹¹Ezekiel 39:11); and by the Septuagint there Polyandrion, which is the name the Greeks give to a burying place, because many men are buried there; and with the Latins the dead are called Plures^{f761}, the many, or the more; and yet the grave is never satisfied with them, (²¹⁰⁶Proverbs 30:16). Or hell, the place of everlasting damnation and destruction, is meant, which has received multitudes of souls already, and where there is room for more, nor will it be full until the last day;

so the eyes of man are never satisfied; as not the eyes of his body with seeing corporeal objects, but still are desirous of seeing more, and indeed everything that is to be seen, and are never glutted, (²¹⁰⁸Ecclesiastes 1:8); so neither the eyes of the carnal mind, or the lusts of it, which are insatiable things, let the objects of them be what they will; as in an ambitious man, a covetous person, or an unclean one.

Ver. 21. [*As*] *the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold*, etc.] For the trying, proving, and purifying these metals; (see ²¹⁰⁸Proverbs 17:3);

so [is] a man to his praise; or “according to the mouth of his praise”^{f762}; if his own mouth praises him, as in (^{3170B}Proverbs 27:2);, he is known to be what he is, a foolish and vainglorious person: or “so a man is proved by the mouth of him that praises him”, as the Vulgate Latin version; or “of them that praise him”, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and so the Targum: the meaning is, either a man is known by the persons that praise him, according to what their characters are; if he is praised by good and virtuous men, he may be thought to be so himself; and if by wicked men, he may be concluded to be so likewise; (see ^{3184B}Proverbs 28:4); or he is known by the effect that praise has upon him; if it swells him with pride, and makes him haughty, conceited, and overbearing, he will appear to be a weak and foolish man; but if he continues modest and humble, and studious and diligent to answer his character, thankful to God for what he has, and to whom he gives all the glory, he will approve himself a wise and good man.

Ver. 22. *Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle*, etc.] As the manna was, (^{0410B}Numbers 11:8); and as wheat beat and bruised in a mortar, or ground in a mill, retains its own nature; so, let a wicked man be used ever so roughly or severely, by words, admonitions, reproofs, and counsels; or by deeds, by corrections and punishment, by hard words or blows, whether publicly or privately; in the midst of the congregation, as the Targum and Syriac version; or of the sanhedrim and council, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions;

[yet] will not his foolishness depart from him; his inbred depravity and natural malignity and folly will not remove, nor will he leave his course of sinning he has been accustomed to; he is stricken in vain, he will revolt more and more, (^{2301B}Isaiah 1:5 ^{2408B}Jeremiah 5:3 13:23). Anaxarchus the philosopher was ordered by the tyrant Nicocreon to be pounded to death in a stone mortar with iron pestles^{f763}, and which he endured with great patience.

Ver. 23. *Be thou diligent to know the state of flocks*, etc.] In what condition they are; what health they enjoy; how fat and fruitful they be; what pasturage they have; and that they want nothing fitting for them that can be had and is necessary; and also the number of them. The calling of the shepherd is here particularly mentioned, because valiant, honourable, innocent, and useful; but the same diligence is to be used in all other callings and business men are employed in, that they may provide for

themselves and their families. It is in the original text, “the face of thy flocks”^{f764}; perhaps the allusion is to the exact and distinct knowledge some very diligent careful shepherds might have, so as to know each sheep in their flocks distinctly; see (~~430B~~ John 10:3); The Septuagint version renders it, the souls of thy flock, as if it was an instruction to spiritual pastors or shepherds, who have the care of the souls of men: and certain it is, that if it is the duty of shepherds in common to be diligent in looking after their sheep, and doing everything the duty of their office requires; then it must become the indispensable duty of pastors of churches to take heed to the flock of God committed to them, and to look into their state and condition, and provide for them, and feed them with knowledge and understanding, (~~40B~~ Acts 20:28);

[and] look well to thy herds; or, “put thy heart”^{f765} to them: show a cordial regard for them, and take a hearty care of them, that they have everything needful for them; and which is for the owner’s good as well as theirs.

Ver. 24. *For riches [are] not for ever*, etc.] A man cannot be assured of the continuance of them; they are uncertain things, here today and gone tomorrow: wherefore, though a man has a considerable share of them, yet should follow one calling or another; particularly husbandry is recommended, or keeping sheep and cattle, which are increasing; by which means his substance will be continued and augmented, which otherwise is not to be depended on, but in a diligent attendance to business;

and doth the crown [endure] to every generation? the royal crown, that is not to be depended upon; a king that wears a crown is not sure he shall always wear it, or that it shall be continued to his family one generation after another. And it is suggested, that it is not even beneath such persons to have a regard to their flocks and herds, and the increase of their riches in this way: the Chinese kings, many of them, formerly employed themselves in husbandry, and set examples of industry and diligence to their subjects^{f766}; King Hezekiah provided himself possessions of flocks and herds in abundance, (~~42B~~ 2 Chronicles 32:28,29).

Ver. 25. *The hay appeareth, and the tender grass showeth itself*, etc.] Some think this is mentioned to illustrate the uncertainty of riches, which soon vanish away; as the tender grass shows itself, and is presently cut down and quickly appears hay, and that soon consumed; but rather this contains an argument to take to the pastoral life and calling, since it may be performed with so much ease; for the earth, the valleys and hills, are

covered with grass for the cattle; so that there is no further trouble than to drive the flocks into the pastures, and feed them there; or to cut down the grass, and make hay of it, and lay it up against the winter for fodder for them. The first clause, I think, may be rendered, “the hay removes”^{f767}, or is carried off; the grass being fit to cut, is mowed and made hay of, and that is carried off and laid up for the winter: “and the tender grass showeth itself”; springs up after the hay is carried off and so makes a second crop; or, however, becomes good pasture for cattle to feed on;

and herbs of the mountains are gathered; for the present use of the cattle; or being made hay of, are laid up for future use; or are gathered for medicine; many of this kind grow on mountains.

Ver. 26. *The lambs [are] for thy clothing*, etc.] This is another argument, exciting to diligence in the pastoral calling, taken from the profit arising from it: the wool of the lambs, or rather “sheep”, as many versions render it; of it cloth is made, and of that garments to be worn, to keep decent, warm, and comfortable; (see ^{<8811>}Job 31:20);

and the goats [are] the price of thy field: these, being brought up and sold, furnish the husbandman with money to purchase more fields to feed his cattle on. The Targum is,

“the goats are for negotiation;”

with the price of them a man may purchase any of the necessities of life for himself and family; these are negotiated, (^{<8571>}Ezekiel 27:21); the Syriac version is, “the goats are for thy food”; and so, between both the sheep and goats, man has both food and raiment; though his food is particularly mentioned in (^{<3171>}Proverbs 27:27).

Ver. 27. *And [thou shalt have] goats’ milk enough for thy food*, etc.] The word for “goats”, in (^{<3176>}Proverbs 27:26), signifies he goats, which were sold to buy fields, pay servants or rent, or purchase the necessities of life; and this here signifies she goats, which were kept for their milk; and which was daily used for food in some countries, and is still in use for the same purpose in some parts of our kingdoms; and in medicine it has been preferred by some physicians above others, next to the milk of women^{f768}: and the diligent husbandman is promised not only plenty of this his own eating, at least a sufficiency of it, but for his family;

for the food of thy household; his wife and children:

and [for] maintenance for thy maidens: or “the lives”^{f769} of them, on which they should live; for, though menservants might require strong meat yet the maidens might live upon milk; besides, Athenaeus^{f770} speaks of most delicious cheese made of goats’ milk, called “tromilicus”. The design of the whole is to show that a man diligent in his business shall have a sufficiency for himself and his family; and, though it may be but the meaner sort of food and clothing he may get, yet, having food and raiment, he should therewith be content.

CHAPTER 28

Ver. 1. *The wicked flee when no man pursueth*, etc.] Through the terrors of a guilty conscience, as in Cain and others; who fear where no immediate cause of fear is, are frightened with their own shadows; and as Gaal was with the shadow of the mountains, he took for an army of men, as his friend told him, (^{<0026>}Judges 9:36); they are chased with the sound of a shaken leaf, and fancy men are at their heels to destroy them, and therefore with all haste flee to some place of safety; (see ^{<0357>}Leviticus 26:17,36) (^{<0358>}Deuteronomy 28:7,25);

but the righteous are bold as a lion; which turns not away from any creature it meets with, nor mends its pace when it is pursued, but walks on intrepidly, and oftentimes lies down and sleeps in open places, and as securely as in woods and dens, being devoid of all fear; hence the heart of a valiant man is said to be as the heart of a lion, (^{<0070>}2 Samuel 17:10); (see ^{<0330>}Proverbs 30:30); so Pindar^{<0771>} compares a courageous man to a lion for boldness. Now righteous men are as bold as this creature, or more so; some of them have stopped the mouths of lions, and have dwelt securely in the midst of them, as righteous Daniel: and all righteous men are or may be as fearless as the lion; fear God they do, but have no reason to fear any other; and many of them are fearless of men, of their menaces and reproaches, or of anything they can do to them; since not only angels are their guardians, but God is on their side, and Christ has overcome the world for them: they are fearless of Satan and his principalities; they are delivered out of his hands; they know he is a coward, though a roaring lion, and when resisted will flee from thorn; yea, that he is a chained, conquered, enemy: and, though they are afraid of committing sin, yet are fearless of the damning power of it; Christ having bore their sins, made satisfaction for thong; for whose sake they are pardoned; and whose righteousness justifies and blood cleanses from all sin: they are fearless of death; its sting being removed, itself abolished as a penal evil, and become a blessing, and is the righteous man's, gain: they are fearless of wrath to come; Christ having delivered them from it, and they being justified by his blood: they are courageous as the lion in fighting the Lord's battles with sin, Satan, and the world, and in enduring hardness as good soldiers of Christ; knowing their cause is good, that Christ is the Captain of their salvation, their spiritual armour is proved, and they are sure of victory and

of a crown They are “confident”^[772] as the lion, as the word may be rendered; they are confident of the love of God, of their interest in Christ, of the grace of God in their hearts, and that all things work together for their good; and that it is, and always will be, well with them, let things go how they will in the world, and so are secure. They are bold and undaunted, both before God and men; before God in prayer, knowing him to be their covenant God in Christ, having in view the blood and righteousness of Christ, and being assisted by his Spirit: and they are undaunted before men; if the righteous man is a minister of the word, he speaks it boldly, as it ought to be spoken, fearing the faces of none, knowing it to be the Gospel of Christ, the truth, as it is in him, and the power of God to salvation; and if a private Christian, he is a public professor of Christ, this word and ordinances, which he is not ashamed to own before all the world; in short, the righteous are bold in life and in death, and will be so in the day of judgment; and it is their righteousness which makes them so, from which they are denominated righteous, even not their own, but the righteousness of Christ.

Ver. 2. *For the transgression of a land many [are] the princes thereof,* etc.] Either together; that is, reigning princes, such as lay claim to the crown, and usurp it; otherwise it is a happiness to a nation to have many princes of the blood, to inherit in succession, to support the crown in their family, and defend a nation, and study the good of it; but it is a judgment to a nation when many rise up as competitors for rule, or do rule, as at Athens, where thirty tyrants sprung up at once; by which factions and parties are made, and which issue in oppression, rapine, and murder: or successively, very quickly, one after another, being dethroned the one by the other: or removed by death, as in the land of Israel, in the times of the judges, and of the kings of Israel and Judah, after the revolt of the ten tribes; which frequent changes produce different administrations, new laws, and fresh taxes, disagreeable to the people; and oftentimes children come to be their princes, which is always reckoned an infelicity to a nation; see (^{<21006>}Ecclesiastes 10:16 ^{<21812>}Isaiah 3:12); and all this is usually for some national sin or sins indulged to, which draw upon a people the divine resentment, and provoke God to suffer such changes among there;

but by a man of understanding [and] knowledge the state [thereof] shall be prolonged, either by a set of wise and understanding, good and virtuous men, who will oppose the growing vice and immoralities of a people, and form themselves into societies for the reformation of manners; the word

“man” being taken collectively for a body of men: or by a wise and prudent minister or ministry, or a set of civil magistrates, who will show themselves to be terrors to evildoers, and a praise to them that do well: or by a wise and prudent prince, who seeks to establish his throne by judgment and mercy; who will take care that justice and judgment be executed in the land, and that vice and profaneness be discouraged; by means of such, the state of a kingdom, which seemed near to ruin, will be prolonged, and the happiness and prosperity of it secured and established; and God, in mercy to it, may long preserve the life of their king, will being a good one, a long reign is always a happiness to a nation. And to this sense is the Vulgate Latin version, “the life of the prince shall be longer”; and the Targum, which is,

“and the sons of men that understand knowledge shall endure;”

(see ²⁰⁹⁵Ecclesiastes 9:15).

Ver. 3. *A poor man that oppresseth the poor*, etc.] Either one that is poor at the time he oppresses another like himself, either by secret fraud or open injury; from whom the oppressed can get no redress, as sometimes he may and does from a rich man: or rather one that has been poor, but now become rich, and got into some place of authority and profit, who should remember what he had been; and it might be expected that such an one would put on bowels of compassion towards the poor, as knowing what it was to be in indigent circumstances; but if, instead of this, he exercises his authority over the poor in a severe and rigid manner, and oppresses them, and squeezes that little out of them they have: he

[is like] a sweeping rain which leaveth no food: like a violent hasty shower of rain; which, instead of watering the seed, herbs, and plants, and causing them to grow, as moderate rain does, it washes away the very seed sown in the earth, or beats out the ripe corn from the ears, or beats it down, so that it riseth not up again; the effect of which is, there is no bread to the eater, nor seed to the sower, and consequently a famine. The design of the proverb is, to show how unnatural as well as intolerable is the oppression of the poor, by one that has been poor himself; even as it is contrary to the nature and use of rain, which is to fructify, and not to sweep away and destroy; and which when it does, there is no standing against it or diverting it.

Ver. 4. *They that forsake the law praise the wicked*, etc.] Who are like them; who forsake and transgress the law, as they do; every like loves its like; wicked men delight in sin, the transgression of the law, and in those that do it. One covetous man will bless and praise another, whom the Lord abhors, and commend his covetousness as frugality and good husbandry: one proud man will call another happy, and praise him as a man of spirit, that will not debase himself, but keep up his authority, rank, and dignity, and not condescend to men of low estates; the workers of wickedness are set up and extolled, and tempters of God, men of atheistical and deistical principles, are not only delivered from the punishment they deserve, but are commended for their bold spirits; (see ^{<9018>}Psalm 10:3 ^{<3015>}Malachi 3:15). Or, “every wicked man praises those that forsake the law”, so Schultens;

but such as keep the law contend with them; that is, with them that forsake it and praise the wicked; they are displeased with them, and show their resentment at them; they tend with them by arguments, and endeavour to convince them of their folly and wickedness; they prove them for it, even though they may be in high places, as John the Baptist reprov'd Herod. The Targum is,

“they contend with them, that they may return,”

or be converted; they strive and take pains with them, to convince them and bring them to repentance, and to a change of sentiments, life, and manners.

Ver. 5. *Evil men understand not judgment*, etc.] Or, “men of wickedness”^{t773}; that are under the governing power of it; who are given up and give up themselves unto it; who, like Ahab, sell themselves to work wickedness: these know not what is just and right between man and man, at least not to do it; they know it not practically; they are wise to do evil, but to do good have no knowledge, (^{<2402>}Jeremiah 4:22); they know not the law of God, the rule of judgment, justice, and equity; at least not the extensiveness and spirituality of it, (^{<2407>}Jeremiah 8:7); and much less the Gospel of Christ, which is sometimes so called, (^{<2301>}Isaiah 42:1,4 51:4). Nor do they notice, as they should, to the judgments of God in the earth; they do not consider his work, and the operation of his hand; the vengeance he takes on wicked men, so Jarchi interprets it; nor do they take any notice of the judgment to come, at which they must appear, and into which they will be brought, and all things done by them;

but they that seek the Lord understand all [things]; this character describes all good men that seek the Lord, in private and in public, that seek him by prayer and supplication, that wait upon him in the ordinances of his house; and all sensible sinners, who seek to Christ for righteousness, for rest, for life and salvation, for more grace from him, for more communion with him, for a greater degree of knowledge of him, and for immortality and eternal life, his kingdom and glory. And such “understand all things”; not in the most full and absolute sense; for this is proper and peculiar to God: nor all things natural and civil, which truly righteous persons, generally speaking, have the least share of, as arts, sciences, languages, trade and commerce in all its branches; and indeed universal knowledge of these things does not belong to anyone man: nor all things in a religious sense; not all the difficult passages of Scripture, in which there are many things hard to be understood; but all things necessary to salvation; all things relating to their fallen, depraved, and miserable state and condition by nature, and to the way and means of their recovery and salvation by Christ; all things relating to a spiritual and saving knowledge of God in Christ; and to the knowledge of the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and to the work of the Spirit of God upon the heart; and of the doctrines of the Gospel, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, and so as to be food for their souls: and which understanding is given them, and they attain unto and increase in, by seeking the Lord, and using the means of knowledge, the word and ordinances; (see ^{<4215>}1 Corinthians 2:15 ^{<4221>}1 John 2:20,27). The Targum and Syriac version render it,

“that understand all good things;”

and so Aben Ezra interprets it: the Arabic version is, “they understand it in all things”; that is, judgment, justice, and equity, in all its branches, and practise it.

Ver. 6. *Better [is] the poor that walketh in his uprightness,* etc.] (See Gill on ^{<4200>}Proverbs 19:1”);

than [he that is] perverse [in his] ways, though he [be] rich; or, “in [his] two ways”^{<774>}: that halts between two ways, or makes use of both; sometimes turns to the one, to the right hand, and sometimes to the other, to the left hand; or that pretends to the one, and walks in the other; would be thought to be a virtuous and religious man, and to walk in the paths of righteousness and truth, when he walks in those of sin and wickedness. And now a poor man that walks evenly and uprightly, according to the

word of God and truth of the Gospel, in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, and in the paths of faith and holiness, is better than he; more honourable, more comfortable, and happy in life and in death; he has grace now, and will have glory hereafter.

Ver. 7. *Whoso keepeth the law [is] a wise son,* etc.] That observes the law of God; for, though he cannot perfectly keep it, yet he delights in it after the inward man; and with his spirit serves it, from a principle of love, in faith, and with a view to the glory of God, without mercenary and sinister ends. Such a man enjoys peace, and has a reward “in” though not “for” keeping the commands of it; so that it is his wisdom to observe it; and he may be truly called a wise man, (^{<1006>}Deuteronomy 4:6); Or that observes the law or commandments of his parents, which they enjoin him; (see ^{<1007>}Proverbs 6:20,21); and particularly the law of God, which requires honour and obedience to be given to parents, and which turns to the account of children; it is well with them, and their days are prolonged on earth, and therefore they are wise that keep it, (^{<1008>}Ephesians 6:1-3); and such a wise son makes a glad father, as the contrary brings shame to him, as in the next clause;

but he that is a companion of riotous [men] shameth his father: that keeps company with gluttons, and indulges his sensual appetite with them; that “feeds”^{f775} such persons and himself, as some render the word; that gives up himself to an epicurean life: he brings himself at last to disgrace and poverty, and so causes shame to his father; who will be charged with neglecting his education, and indulging him in such a luxurious way of living; (see ^{<1005>}Proverbs 10:5 29:15).

Ver. 8. *He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance,* etc.] By biting and oppressing the poor; letting him have money at an exorbitant interest, and goods at an exorbitant price, and so increases his substance in this scandalous manner; hence usury is in (^{<1026>}Leviticus 25:36), called “increase”, and by the Greeks *τοκος*, a “birth”, because money is the birth of money, as Aristotle^{f776} observes; and so by the Latins “foenus”, as if it was “foetus”,^{f777} “a birth”. The word for usury here signifies biting; and so usury, with classical writers^{f778}, is said to bite; and while it increases the substance of the usurer, it lessens and devours that of others;

he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor; not for himself, nor for his posterity; but for such, though not intentionally but eventually, as will make a good use of it, and distribute it to the necessities of the poor. The

meaning is, that things should be so overruled by the providence of God, that what such an avaricious man gets in his dishonest way should not be enjoyed by him or his; but should be taken out of his hands, and put into the hands of another, that will do good with it, by showing mercy to the poor; see (^{<182716>}Job 27:16,17).

Ver. 9. *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law*, etc.] Not merely the moral law, but the word of God in general, and any and every doctrine of it; though the law is to be heard and attended to, what it commands and forbids, its precepts, menaces, and curses: indeed the Spirit of God is not received by the hearing of the law, nor does faith come by that; but by hearing the word of God, particularly the Gospel; which yet then turn away their ears from, and are turned to fables, and choose to hearken to anything rather than that; and, like the deaf adder, stop their ears to the voice of the charmer, charming ever so wisely; the folly and sad effects of which will be seen when too late;

even his prayer [shall be] abomination; that is, to God; not only his ungodly actions, but even his outward exercises of religion, which carry in them some show of goodness and holiness; and particularly his prayer to God, which in upright persons is the delight of the Lord; yet in such an one it will be abhorred by him; when he is in distress, and shall pray to the Lord, he will not only turn a deaf ear to him, as he has to his law or word, but he will despise and abhor him and his prayer; because he has set at nought his counsel, and despised his reproof, (^{<31024>}Proverbs 1:24-28).

Ver. 10. *Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way*, etc.] That is, who attempts to deceive them, and draw them into errors or immoralities, and so into a snare, into mischief and ruin; first into the evil of sin, in order to bring them into the evil of punishment; I say, who attempts to do it; for it is not possible that God's elect, those who are truly righteous and good, should be totally and finally deceived, (^{<4124>}Matthew 24:24);

he shall fall himself into his own pit; which he had dug and prepared for the righteous, who through the grace and goodness of God is preserved from it; the mischief intended for the good man falls upon himself in righteous, judgment, (^{<310715>}Psalms 7:15,16);

but the upright shall have, good [things] in possession; or "shall inherit good things"^{<1779>}; they are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and shall

inherit all things; they have all good things in Christ, with him and from him now; nor can they be taken from them, or they be caused to lose them by all the policy and craft of men and devils, who seek to draw them into sin and snares with that view; but, notwithstanding all their efforts, they shall keep possession of their good things here, the grace of the spirit, and the blessings of grace, and shall enjoy glory hereafter.

Ver. 11. *The rich man [is] wise in his own conceit*, etc.] Ascribing his getting riches to his great sagacity, wisdom, and prudence; and being flattered with it by dependents on him;

but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out: a man of good understanding, whether in things natural, civil, moral, or spiritual, though poor, as a man may be poor and yet a wise man; such an one, when he comes into company with a rich man, wise in his own conceit, he soon by conversation with him finds him out to be a very foolish man, and exposes him as one; for riches are not always to men of understanding, or all that have them are not such; and better is a poor wise man than even a foolish king; (see ^{<2091>}Ecclesiastes 9:11,15 4:13).

Ver. 12. *When righteous [men] do rejoice, [there is] great glory*, etc.] When it is well with them; when they are in prosperous circumstances; when they are countenanced and encouraged by the government under which they are; when they have the free exercise of their religion; and especially when they are advanced to places of profit, honour, and trust, which must make them cheerful and joyful; it is a glory to a land, it adds greatly to the glory of it, and a fine prospect there is of the increase and continuance of it;

but when the wicked rise: to honour and dignity, and are set in high places, and are in great power and authority, which they exercise to the distress of the righteous and all good men:

a man is hidden: a good man; he hides himself, as in (^{<1838>}Proverbs 28:28); he withdraws himself from court, from city, from company, from commerce, and business, because of the tyranny and persecution of wicked men; and flees to distant places, and wanders in deserts and mountains, in caves and dens of the earth; as some saints, under the Old Testament, did, and as the Church, in Gospel times, fled from the tyranny of antichrist into the wilderness, to hide herself: or, “a man is” or “shall be sought for”^{>f780}, and searched out; as wicked persecutors are very diligent to search for and

find out such persons that hide themselves, and fetch them out of their hiding places, and cruelly use them.

Ver. 13. *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper*, etc.] God may cover a man's sins, and it is an instance of his grace, and it is the glory of it to do it, but a man may not cover his own: it is right in one good man to cover the sins of another, reproving him secretly, and freely forgiving him; but it is wrong in a man to cover his own: not that any man is bound to accuse himself before a court of judicature, or ought to expose his sins to the public, which would be to the hurt of his credit, and to the scandal of religion; but whenever he is charged with sin, and reprov'd for it by his fellow Christian, he should not cover it, that is, he should own it; for not to own and acknowledge it is to cover it; he should not deny it, which is to cover it with a lie, and is adding sin to sin; nor should he justify it, as if he had done a right thing; nor extenuate or excuse it, or impute it to others that drew him into it, as Adam, which is called a covering transgression, as Adam, (^{<4813>}Job 31:33); for such a man "shall not prosper"; in soul or body, in things temporal or spiritual; he shall not have peace of mind and conscience; but, sooner or later, shall feel the stings it; he shall not succeed even in those things he has in view by covering his sins; he shall not be able to cover them long, for there is nothing covered but what shall be revealed; if not in this life, which yet often is, however at the day of judgment, when every secret thing shall be made manifest; nor shall he escape the shame and punishment he thought to avoid by covering it, as may be observed in the case of Achan, (^{<4871>}Joshua 7:11-25); in short, he shall have no mercy shown him by God or man, as appears by the antithesis in the next clause;

but whoso confesseth and forsaketh [them] shall have mercy; who confesses them to men privately and publicly, according to the nature of the offences, from whom they find mercy; but not to a priest, in order for absolution, which no man can give; sin is only in this sense to be confessed to God, against it is committed, and who only can pardon it; and though it is known unto him, yet he requires an acknowledgment of it, which should be done from the heart, with an abhorrence of the sin, and in the faith of Christ, as a sacrifice for it; and it is not enough to confess, there must be a forsaking likewise, a parting with sin, a denying of sinful self, a leaving the former course of sin, and a quitting the company of wicked men before used to, and an abstaining from all appearance of evil; as is and will be the case, where there is a true sight and sense of sin, and the grace of God takes place: and such find "mercy", pardoning grace and mercy, or pardon

in a way of mercy, and not merit; for though the sinner confesses and forsakes it, it is not that which merits pardon and mercy in God, who is rich in it, delights in showing it, and from whom it may be hoped for and expected by all such persons; see (~~1915~~ Psalm 32:5 ~~600~~ 1 John 1:9). So the Targum and Syriac version, God will have mercy on him.

Ver. 14. *Happy [is] the man that feareth always*, etc.] Not men, but the Lord; there is a fear and reverence due to men, according to the stations in which they are; but a slavish fear of man, and which deters from the worship of God and obedience to him, is criminal, and brings a snare; and a man, under the influence of it, cannot be happy: nor is a servile fear of God intended, a fear of wrath and damnation, or a distrust of his grace, a continual calling in question his love, and an awful apprehension of his displeasure and vengeance; for in such fear is torment, and with it a man can never be happy; but it is a reverence and godly fear, a filial one, a fear of God and his goodness, which he puts into the hearts of his people; a fear, indeed, of offending him, of sinning against him, by which a man departs from evil, and forsakes it, as well as confesses it; but is what arises from a sense of his goodness: and it is well when such a fear of God is always before the eyes and on the hearts of men; in their closets and families, in their trade and commerce, in all companies into which they come, as, well as in the house of God and the assembly of his saints, where he is to be feared; as also in prosperity and adversity, even throughout the whole course of life, passing the time of their sojourning here in fear: and such a man is happy; the eye of God is on him, his heart is towards him, and he delights it, him; his secret is with him, he sets a guard of angels about him, has laid up goodness for him, and communicates largely to him;

but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief; that hardens his heart from the fear of the Lord; neither confesses his sin, nor forsakes it; bids, as it were, defiance to heaven, strengthens and hardens himself in his wickedness, and by his hard and impenitent heart treasures up to himself wrath against the day of wrath; he falls “into evil”,^{f781} as it may be rendered, into the evil of sin yet more and more, which the hardness of his heart brings him into, and so into the evil of punishment here and hereafter.

Ver. 15. *[As] a roaring lion, and a ranging bear*, etc.] Which are both terrible; the lion that roars for want of food, or when it is over its prey; and the bear, when it runs from place to place in quest of provision, being “hungry [and very] desirous” of food, has a keen appetite, as some think

the word^{f782} signifies. The Targum and Jarchi take it to be expressive of the cry and roaring it makes at such a time, as well as the lion; (see ^{<2891>}Isaiah 59:11); so the Tigurine version. “Roaring” is the proper epithet of a lion, and is frequently given it in Scripture, and in other writers^{f783}; and the bear, it is to have its name, in the Oriental language, from the growling and murmuring noise it makes when hungry; hence that of Horace^{f784};

[so is] a wicked ruler over the poor people; one that rules over them in a tyrannical manner, sadly oppresses them, takes away the little from them they have, which is very cruel and barbarous; when he ought to protect and defend them, against whom they cannot stand, and whom they dare not resist; and who therefore must be as terrible to them, being as cruel and voracious as the above animals. Tyrants are frequently compared to lions, (^{<3407>}Jeremiah 4:7 50:17 ^{<3507>}2 Timothy 4:17); and the man of sin, the wicked ruler and great oppressor of God’s poor people, is compared to both; his feet are as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion, (^{<6112>}Revelation 13:2).

Ver. 16. *The prince that wanteth understanding [is] also a great oppressor*, etc.] Or, “much in oppressions”^{f785}; he multiplies them, and abounds in them; he distresses his subjects in a variety of ways and methods he uses to extort money from them by which he shows his want of understanding: he is a wise prince that uses gentle methods, and gains the affections of his people, and who cheerfully supports his crown and government with honour and glory; but he is a foolish prince that uses them with rigour. It may be rendered, “and a prince that wanteth understanding, and is much”, or “abounds, in oppressions”; in laying heavy burdens and taxes on his people, in an arbitrary manner; “shall shorten, and not prolong his days”^{f786}, as it may be supplied from the next clause; either his subjects will rise up against him, and dethrone him, and destroy him; or God, in mercy to them, and in judgment to him, will remove him by death;

[but] he that hateth covetousness shall prolong [his] days; to hate covetousness is a good qualification of a civil magistrate, prince, or ruler, (^{<0282>}Exodus 18:21). This sin is the cause of a wicked prince oppressing his subjects; but where it is hated, which is seen by moderation in government, and easing of the people as much as possible; such a prince, as he has the hearts of his subjects, is well pleasing to God, by whom he reigns; and such an one, through the prayers of the people for him, and the goodness of

God unto him, lives long, and reigns prosperously; and dies, as David, in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour.

Ver. 17. *A man that doeth violence to the blood of [any] person,* etc.]

That sheds the blood of any in a violent manner; that lays violent hands upon a club, and takes away his life, contrary to the law in (^{<0006>}Genesis 9:6). Or, “that is pressed because of the blood of any person”^{f787}; pressed in his own mind; filled with horror, and tortured in his conscience, for the innocent blood he has shed: the letter “daleth” in the word “Adam” is lesser than usual; and Vitranga, on (^{<346>}Isaiah 34:6); observes, that it signifies a man red with blood, oppressed in his conscience, and depressed by God, which this minute letter is a symbol of; and thinks it applicable to Edom or Rome: or it signifies one pressed, pursued, and dose followed by the avenger of blood;

shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him; support or help him. When such a murderer flees, and is pursued, and unawares falls into a pit, or is like to do so, let no man warn him of it, or help him out of it; or if he flees to a pit to hide himself, let no man hold him or detain him there, or suffer him to continue in such a lurking place, but discover him or pluck him out; or, if he is a fugitive and a vagabond all his days, as Cain, the murderer of his brother, was, till he comes to the pit of the grave, let no man yield him any support or sustenance.

Ver. 18. *Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved,* Or “be safe”^{f788} from those that seek his life, plot against him, shoot at him, as the wicked do at the upright in heart, but the Lord protects him; and it is even well with him in times of public calamities; the Lord has his chambers and hiding places for him; and he is safe from falling, as may be gathered from the opposite clause; for he walks surely, and is in the hands of Christ, and is kept by him from a final and total falling away: and he shall be saved also with an everlasting salvation; from sin, and all the effects of it; from the curse of the law, from wrath to come, from hell and damnation. Not that his upright walk is the cause of this; the moving cause of salvation is the grace of God; the procuring cause, our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Author of it: but this is a descriptive character of the persons that are and shall be saved; it is a clear case that such have the grace of God, and therefore shall have glory; (see Gill on “^{<309>}Proverbs 10:9”);

but [he that is] perverse [in his] ways; “in his two ways”, as in (^{<076>}Proverbs 27:6); or many ways, and all perverse and wicked:

shall fall at once; his destruction shall come suddenly upon him, when he is not aware of it, and when he cries, Peace, peace, to himself: or in one of them; in one or other of his perverse ways.

Ver. 19. *He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread*, etc.] Or, “shall he filled” or “satisfied with bread”^{f789}: shall have bread enough, and to spare; provisions of all sorts, and in great plenty; (see Gill on “^{<3021>}Proverbs 12:11”);

but he that followeth, after vain [persons]; empty idle persons; keeps company and spends his time with them, when he should be about the business of his calling:

shall have poverty enough; or be “filled with [it]”^{f790}; he shall be exceeding poor, reduced to the utmost distress, be clothed in rags and destitute of daily food.

Ver. 20. *A faithful man shall abound with blessings*, etc.] Or, “a man of faithfulness”^{f791}. A very faithful man, that is truly so; that is so in a moral sense; true to his work, makes good his promises, fulfils his contracts, abides by the obligations he lays himself under; is faithful in every trust reposed in him, be it greater or lesser matters, in every station in which it is, and throughout the whole course of his life. Such a man abounds with the blessings and praises of men; all value him, and speak well of him: and with the blessings of divine Providence; he is “much [in] blessings”^{f792}, as it may be rendered; as in receiving blessings from God, so in giving them to men; such a man is usually charitable and beneficent. And it may be understood of one that is faithful, in a spiritual and evangelic sense; for of such characters are the followers of the Lamb, (^{<6674>}Revelation 17:14). It is in the original, “a man of truths”^{f793}; one that has the truth of grace in him; that knows the grace of God in truth; with whom the truth of the Gospel is; who has learnt it, known it, embraced it, values it, and abides by it; and who has a concern with Christ, who is the truth, who is formed, lives, and dwells in his heart; of whom he has made a good profession, and holds it fast, and whom he cleaves unto. The character of “faithful” belongs both to the true ministers of Christ, who preach the pure Gospel, and the whole of it; who seek not to please men, but God; and not themselves, and their own glory, but the things of Christ, and his glory; and continue to do so in the face of all opposition: and to private Christians, the faithful in Christ Jesus; who truly believe in him, stand by his truths, abide by his ordinances, and are faithful to one another, and continue so till death: these abound with

the blessings of the covenant of grace, with all spiritual blessings in Christ, with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; they have an abundance of grace in them, given them in conversion, faith, hope, love, humility, and many other graces, in the exercise of which they are made to abound; and they have an abundance of blessings of grace bestowed on them, pardon of sin, a justifying righteousness, adoption, meetness for and right unto eternal life; they have Christ, and all things along with him; so that they may be truly said to have all things, and abound;

but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent; he that is over anxious, and immoderately desirous of being rich, and pursues every method of obtaining his desires, with all his might and main; that labours night and day for it; though he takes no criminal nor unlawful methods, properly so called, nor does he do anything injurious to others, yet he is not innocent; that too much anxiety in him is criminal; nor is he free from covetousness; (see ^{<2304>}Proverbs 23:4); and if he uses any unjust and unlawful means to acquire wealth, and resolves to be rich, right or wrong, “per fas, per nefas”, he shall not be innocent, neither before God nor men: so the Targum renders it,

“he that runs into iniquity, that he may be rich;”

and indeed when a man hastily, or in a short time, becomes rich, though he cannot be directly charged with fraud and injustice, yet he is not innocent in the minds of men, or free from their suspicious and jealousies of him. A man that makes haste to be rich is opposed to him that is faithful and true to his word and contracts, and is the same that Juvenal^{f794} calls “avarus properans”; (see ^{<5409>}1 Timothy 6:9,10).

Ver. 21. *To have respect of persons [is] not good, &c*, In courts of judicature, to give a cause or pass sentence in favour of a person, because he is rich, or is a relation, a friend, an acquaintance, or has done a kindness; and against another, because of the reverse, (^{<1895>}Leviticus 19:15) (^{<6169>}Deuteronomy 16:19); nor in religious assemblies, making a difference between the rich and the poor, (^{<3001>}James 2:1,2); this is not good in itself, nor productive of good effects, and cannot be well pleasing to God, who himself is no respecter of persons;

for for a piece of bread [that] man will transgress; the laws of God and men; having used himself to such unrighteous methods of proceeding, he

will do any base action for a small gain, he will stick at nothing, and do it for anything; as Cato used to say of M. Coelius the tribune,

“that he might be hired, for a morsel of bread, to speak or hold his peace;”

(see ~~433~~ Ezekiel 13:19).

Ver. 22. *He that hasteth to be rich*, etc.] As every man that is eagerly desirous of riches is; he would be rich at once^{f795}, and cannot wait with any patience in the ordinary course of means:

[hath] an evil eye; on the substance of others, to get it, right or wrong; is an evil man, and takes evil methods to be rich^{f796}; see (~~540~~ 1 Timothy 6:9,10); or an envious one; is an envious man; as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; he envies others, as the Vulgate Latin version, the riches of other men; he grudges everything that goes beside himself; and that makes him in haste to be rich, that he may be equal to or superior to others: or he is a sordid, avaricious, illiberal man, that will not part with anything for the relief, for others, and is greedy of everything to amass wealth to himself; an evil eye is opposed to a good or bountiful one, that is, to a man that is liberal and generous, (~~420~~ Proverbs 22:9 ~~400~~ Matthew 20:15);

and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him; for wealth gotten hastily, and especially wrongfully, diminishes, wastes, and comes to nothing in the end; it sometimes flies away as fast as it comes; it has wings to do the one, as well as the other: this the man in haste to be rich does not consider, or he would have taken another method; since this is not the true way of getting and keeping riches, but of losing them, and coming to want; (see ~~431~~ Proverbs 13:11 20:21).

Ver. 23. *He that rebuketh a man*, etc.] His friend and acquaintance, for any fault committed by him; which reproof he gives in a free and faithful manner, yet kind, tender, and affectionate. The word rendered “afterwards”, which begins the next clause, according to the accents belongs to this, and is by some rendered, “he that rebuketh a man after me”^{f797}; after my directions, according to the rules I have given; that is, after God, and by his order; or Solomon, after his example, who delivered out these sentences and instructions. The Targum so connects the word, and renders the clause,

“he that rebukes a man before him;”

openly, to his thee: but rather it may be rendered “behind”; that is, as Cocceius interprets it, apart, alone, privately, and secretly, when they are by themselves; which agrees with Christ’s instructions, (^{<4085>}Matthew 18:15);

afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue; for though the reproofs given him may uneasy upon his mind at first, and may be cutting and wounding, and give him some pain, and so some dislike to the reprover; yet when he coolly considers the nature and tendency of the reproof, the manner in which it was given, and the design of it, he will love, value, and esteem his faithful friend and rebuker, more than the man that fawned upon him, and flattered him with having done that which was right and well; or, as the Targum, than he that divideth the tongue, or is doubletongued; and so the Syriac version; (see ^{<4076>}Proverbs 27:5,6 ^{<4080>}Psalms 141:3).

Ver. 24. *Whoso robbeth his father or his mother,* etc.] As Micah did of eleven hundred shekels of silver, (^{<4072>}Judges 17:2);

and saith, [it is] no transgression; what is his father’s or his mother’s is his own, or as good as his own, it will come to him at their death; and if he wants it before, he thinks he ought to have it; and if they are not willing to give it him, it is with him no sin to rob them of it; and this he says within himself, to quiet his conscience when he has done it; or to others who may charge him with it: but, whatever such a man thinks, sins against parents are greater than against others; as parricide is a greater sin than any other kind of murder, so robbing of parents is greater than any other kind of theft; it is more aggravated, especially when parents are aged, and cannot work for themselves, but depend on what they have for their livelihood; whereas a young man can, and ought, and should rather give to his parents than rob them of what they have;

the same [is] the companion of a destroyer; of a murderer; either he has got into such company which have put him upon such wicked practices; or he will soon get into such a society, and, from a robber of his father and mother, become a robber on the highway, and a murderer; and he has wickedness enough to be a destroyer of the lives of his parents, as well as of their substance; and sometimes the one sin leads to the other.

Ver. 25. *He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife,* etc.] Or, of a “large heart”ⁱ⁷⁹⁸, or has an enlarged one; not with useful knowledge and

understanding, as Solomon had; nor a heart enlarged with love and affection to the souls of men, as the Apostle Paul had; but either has a covetous one, who enlarges its desire as hell, and is never satisfied with what he has, and so is continually contending with his neighbours, engaging in lawsuits for their property, or unwilling to pay his lawful debts; or of a proud spirit, and despises all around him, and cannot bear opposition and contradiction; and is of a wrathful and revengeful spirit, and always at variance with his neighbours and quarrelling with them; (see ^{<2085>}Proverbs 18:15);

but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat; that trusts in the Lord, both for things temporal and spiritual; does not covet his neighbour's goods, nor disturbs his peace, nor injures his person or property to increase his own, but depends upon the Lord for a supply of necessary good things; such an one shall be fat and flourishing, both in his temporal and spiritual estate; all he does shall prosper; he shall want no good thing, (^{<3841>}Psalm 84:11,12 ^{<2470>}Jeremiah 17:7, 8).

Ver. 26. *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool*, etc.] Since the thoughts and imaginations of the thoughts of the heart are only evil, and that continually; they are vain and vague, sinful and corrupt; the affections are inordinate, the conscience defiled, the understanding darkened, and the will perverse; there is no good thing in it, nor any that comes out of it, but all the reverse; it is deceitful and desperately wicked: he must be a fool, and not know the plague of his heart, that trusts in it; and even for a good man to be self-confident, and trust to the sincerity of his heart, as Peter did, or to the good frame of the heart, as many do, is acting a foolish part; and especially such are fools as the Scribes and Pharisees, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, when a man's best righteousness is impure and imperfect, and cannot justify him in the sight of God; it is moreover a weak and foolish part in men to trust to the wisdom and counsel of their heart, to lean to their own understanding, even it, things natural and civil, and not to ask wisdom of God, or take the advice of men, and especially it, things religious and sacred; (see ^{<2085>}Proverbs 3:5,6);

but whoso walketh wisely; as he does who walks according to the rule of the divine word; who makes the testimonies of the Lord his counsellors; who consults with his sacred writings, and follows the directions of them; who walks as he has Christ for his pattern and example, and makes the

Spirit of God his guide, and walks after him, and not after the flesh; who walks with wise men, and takes their advice in all matters of moment, not trusting to his own wisdom and knowledge; who walks as becomes the Gospel of Christ, and in all the ordinances of it; who walks inoffensively to all men, and so in wisdom towards them that are without, and in love to them who are within; who walks circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time;

he shall be delivered; he shall be delivered from the snares of his own deceitful heart, which he will not trust; and from the temptations of Satan; and from all afflictions and troubles he meets with in the way; and from a final and total falling away; and from eternal death and destruction: “he shall be saved”, as some versions render it, even with an everlasting salvation. The Targum is,

“he shall be protected from evil.”

Ver. 27. *He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack*, etc.] That gives alms unto them, relieves them in their distress, supplies them with money, food, or clothes, and does it cheerfully, largely, and liberally, as the case requires; such an one shall not want any good thing; he shall not be the poorer for what he gives; he shall not miss it, nor his substance be diminished; he shall not come to poverty and want, yea, he shall be enriched, and his substance increased, for more is intended than is expressed. Jarchi interprets this of a wise man not restraining doctrine from a disciple, but giving it to him liberally;

but he that hideth his eyes; that is, from the poor, as the Targum and Syriac version add; that does not care to see his person, to behold his miseries, or know his case, lest his heart should be moved with compassion, and should draw out anything from him; (see ²⁸⁰⁰Isaiah 58:7). Such an one

shall have many a curse; not only from the poor he hardens himself against, but from other persons, who observe his miserable and covetous disposition; and from the Lord himself, who abhors such persons, and curses their very blessings now, and will bid them depart from him as accursed persons hereafter.

Ver. 28. *When the wicked rise, men hide themselves*, etc.] When wicked men are raised to places of power and authority, rich men hide themselves, lest they should become a prey to them; and good men hide themselves,

that they may not be put to death by them; or as ashamed to behold their evil actions; (see Gill on “~~2182~~Proverbs 28:12”);

but when they perish; wicked men, either by a natural or violent death; or perish as to their authority and power, being turned out of their places:

the righteous increase; such who before hid themselves appear, and, being put into the places of the wicked, encourage truth and righteousness, by which means the number of good men is multiplied; and which is a great happiness to a nation, and shows the usefulness and advantage that good magistrates are of unto it.

CHAPTER 29

Ver. 1. *He that being often reported hardeneth [his] neck*, etc.] Or “a man of reproofs”^{f799}; either a man that takes upon him to be a censurer and reprover of others, and is often at that work, and yet does those things himself which he censures and reproves in others; and therefore must have an impudent face and a hard heart a seared conscience and a stiff neck; his neck must be an iron sinew and his brow brass: or rather a man that is often reproved by others by parents by ministers of the Gospel, by the Lord himself, by the admonitions of his word and Spirit and by the correcting dispensations of his providence; and yet despises and rejects all counsel and admonition, instruction and reproofs of every kind, and hardens himself against them and shows no manner of regard unto them. The metaphor is taken from oxen, which kick and toss about and will not suffer the yoke to be put upon their necks. Such an one

shall suddenly be destroyed; or “broken”^{f800}; as a potter’s vessel is broken to pieces with an iron rod, and can never be put together again; so such persons shall be punished with everlasting destruction, which shall come upon them suddenly, when they are crying Peace to themselves notwithstanding the reproofs of God and men;

and that without remedy; or, “and there [is] no healing”^{f801}; no cure of their disease, which is obstinate; no pardon of their sins; no recovery of them out of their miserable and undone state and condition; they are irretrievably lost; there is no help for them, having despised advice and instruction; (see ^{<1052>}Proverbs 5:12,13).

Ver. 2. *When the righteous are in authority*, etc.] Or “are increased”^{f802}; either in number or in riches, or in power and dominion; are set in high places, and have the exercise of civil government and the execution of the laws in their hands; for the protection of good men in their civil and religious privileges, and for the punishment of evil men; for the encouraging of all that is good, and for the discouraging of everything that is bad;

the people rejoice; the whole body of the people, because of the public good; a state is happy under such an administration; everyone feels and enjoys the advantage of it; (see ^{<1043>}1 Kings 4:20);

but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn; or “groan”^{f803}, or “will groan”, under their tyranny and oppression, and because of the sad state of things; the number of good men is lessened, being cut off, or obliged to flee; wicked men and wickedness are encouraged and promoted; heavy taxes are laid upon them, and exorbitant demands made and cruelty, injustice, and arbitrary power exercised; and no man’s person and property safe; (see ^{<4001>}Proverbs 10:11 28:12,28).

Ver. 3. *Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father*, etc.] He that is a philosopher, especially a religious one, that not only loves and seeks after natural wisdom, but moral wisdom and knowledge; and more particularly evangelical wisdom, Christ the Wisdom of God, who is to be valued and loved above all things; the Gospel of Christ, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery; and the knowledge of it which is the wisdom which comes from above and is pure and peaceable; and which lies much in the fear of God, and in the faith of Jesus Christ, attended with all the fruits of righteousness: such a son makes glad his father, both because of his temporal good, since he does not waste but improve the substance he has given him; and because of his spiritual and eternal welfare; and since instead of being a reproach he is an honour to him; (see ^{<4001>}Proverbs 10:1);

but he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth [his] substance: his father has given him, and comes to want and beggary; all which is a grief to his parents: or, “that feeds harlots”^{f804}; who live in a riotous and voluptuous manner, and soon drain a man of his substance, and bring him to a morsel of bread; (see ^{<4053>}Luke 15:13,14,30 ^{<4066>}Proverbs 6:26); and such a son grieves his father, seeing he spends his substance and damns his soul.

Ver. 4. *The king by judgment establisheth the land*, etc.] By executing, judgment and justice among his subjects, he establishes the laws of the land, and the government of it; he secures its peace and prosperity, and preserves his people in the possession at their properties and privileges; and makes them rich and powerful, and the state stable and flourishing, so that it continues firm to posterity; such a king was Solomon, (^{<4498>}2 Chronicles 9:8);

but he that receiveth gifts overthroweth it; that, is, a king that does so; Gersom observes that he is not called a king, because such a man is not worthy of the name, who takes gifts and is bribed by them to pervert judgment and justice; whereby the laws of the nation are violated, and the

persons and properties of his subjects become the prey of wicked men; and so the state is subverted and falls to ruin: it is in the original text, “a man of oblations”^{f805}; the word is generally used of the sacred oblations or offerings under the law; hence some understand it of a sacrilegious prince who of his own arbitrary power converts sacred things to civil uses. The Targum, Septuagint, Syriac and Arabic versions render it, a wicked and ungodly man; and the Vulgate Latin version, a covetous man; as such a prince must be in whatsoever light he is seen, whether as a perverter of justice through bribes, or as a sacrilegious man; though it may be rendered, “a man of exactions”^{f806}, for it is used of the oblation of a prince which he receives from his people, (^{<860>}Ezekiel 45:9,13); as Aben Ezra observes; and so it may be interpreted of a king that lays heavy taxes upon his people, and thereby brings them to distress and poverty, and the state to ruin.

Ver. 5. *A man that flattereth his neighbour*, etc.] That speaks smooth things to him gives him flattering titles, speaks fair to his face, highly commends him on one account or another:

spreadeth a net for his feet; has an idle design upon him, and therefore should be guarded against; his view is to draw him into a snare and make a prey of him; he attacks him on his weak side, and hopes to make some advantage of it to himself; wherefore flatterers should be avoided as pernicious persons; or he spreads a net for his own feet, and is taken in the snare which he had laid for his neighbour; or falls into the pit he dug for him, as Gersom observes; (see ^{<810>}Psalm 140:5 ^{<810>}Hosea 5:1).

Ver. 6. *In the transgression of an evil man [there is] a snare*, etc.] Or, according to the accents in some copies, “in the transgression of a man is an evil snare”, as Aben Ezra observes the words may be read; there is a snare in sin to man himself; one sin leads on to another, and a man is snared by the works of his own hands, and is implicated and held in the cords of his own iniquity, and falls into the snare of the devil, out of which he is not easily recovered; and the transgression of one man is a snare to another; he is drawn into sin by ill examples; and, by indulging himself in sin, the evil day comes upon him unawares as a snare; and sooner or later he is filled with horrors of conscience, anguish, and distress;

but the righteous doth sing and rejoice; not at the snares of others, their sin or punishment; for such a man rejoices not in iniquity, though he sometimes does at the punishment of sinners, because of the glory of the divine justice; and Gersom thinks this is here meant; see (^{<880>}Psalm 58:10);

but rather, as he also observes, the righteous man rejoices at his deliverance from the snares of sin and Satan, and of the world; he rejoices in the righteousness by which he is denominated righteous; not his own, but the righteousness of Christ, it being so rich and glorious, so perfect and complete; he rejoices in salvation by him it being so suitable, so, real, so full, so free, and so much for the glory of God; he rejoices in the pardon of his sins through the blood of Christ, and in the expiation of them by his sacrifice; he rejoices in his person, in the greatness, fitness, fulness, and beauty of it; he rejoices in all his offices he bears and executes, and in all the relations he stands in to him; he rejoices in his word and ordinances, in the prosperity of his cause and interest, in the good of his people, and in hope of the glory of God; and even sings for joy in the view of electing, redeeming, and calling grace, and eternal life and happiness; he has peace of conscience now, fears no enemy, nor any danger, and expects a life of glory in the world to come; and oftentimes sings on the brink of the grave, in the view of death and eternity.

Ver. 7. *The righteous considereth the cause of the poor*, etc.] Not his poverty and distress, so as to relieve him, which yet he does, (^{<B40E>}Psalm 41:1); nor the person of the poor in judgment, and which he ought not to do; for as he should not regard a rich man's person, and favour him, because he is rich; so neither a poor man, because he is poor, through an affectation of mercy, (^{<B915>}Leviticus 19:15); but the cause of the poor, and the justice of that, and do him justice, though a poor man. This is to be understood chiefly of a civil magistrate, a judge righteous; who will take notice of and regard a poor man's cause, and take a good deal of pains and care that he is not injured. Or, "knoweth the judgment of the poor"^{f807} he acquaints himself with his case, makes himself thoroughly master of it, searches out his cause as Job did, (^{<B916>}Proverbs 29:16);

[but] the wicked regardeth not to know [it]; or, "does not understand knowledge"^{f808} of the poor man's cause and case; and there being no money to be had, he does not care to consider it, and look into it, and get knowledge of it, and do him justice; he will not take his cause in hand, or plead it.

Ver. 8. *Scornful men bring a city into a snare*, etc.] Such as despise dominion, speak evil of dignities; proud and haughty men, that speak loftily, and with a contempt of their superiors; or who make a mock at religion, and scoff at all that is good and serious; these bring the inhabitants

of a city into a snare, to rebel against their governors, and so into mischief and ruin: or, they “burn a city”, as the Septuagint and Syriac versions^{f809}; they inflame it, or blow it up into a flame; raise a combustion in it, and fill it with strifes and contentions; and bring down the wrath of God upon it, like fire: or, they “blow upon a city”^{f810}; raise storms and tempests in it; turn all things upside down, and throw it into the utmost confusion, or blow it up;

but wise [men] turn away wrath; the wrath of men, by their wise counsels and advice, and appease tumults and seditions, and restore things to a quiet and settled state; or the wrath of God, by interposing with their prayers between him and a sinful people, as Moses did, (³⁹⁶³Psalm 106:23).

Ver. 9. [*If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man*, etc.] Enters into a controversy with him, either by word or writing, in order to convince him of his folly and wickedness, of his errors and mistakes;

whether he rage or laugh, [there is] no rest; that is, either whether the fool is angry with the wise man, and rages at him and abuses him, and calls him names, or laughs at him, and scoffs at all his arguments, reasons, and advice; yet the wise man does not cease from proceeding in the contest with him; or he is not dejected and cast down, and discouraged; or, as the Targum is,

“he is not broken;”

but patiently bears his wrath fury, his scoffs and jeers: or else whether the wise man deals roughly or gently with the fool, in a morose or in a mere jocose way: it has no upon him; he is never the better for it; he does not acquiesce or rest in what he says like the Pharisees in Christ’s time, who are compared to surly children: who, when “piped to, danced not”; and, when “mourned to, lamented not”, (see Gill on ⁴¹¹⁶Matthew 11:16-17”). The design of the proverb is to show, that all labour to reclaim a fool from his folly is lost, let a man take what methods he will, (³¹⁷²Proverbs 27:22).

Ver. 10. *The bloodthirsty hate the upright*, etc.] Cain did Abel; and as the wicked world hate all good men, and persecute them, even unto death;

but the just must seek his soul; either the soul of the bloodthirsty, and that either the good of their souls; seek their spiritual welfare, and pray for it, even though they are so cruel and inhuman: or just magistrates will seek after such persons, to punish them for shedding the blood of the upright. Or else the meaning is, that just persons seek the soul of the upright, and

make inquisition for the blood of such, to punish for it; which comes to the same sense, as Aben Ezra observes: or rather, such seek to defend and preserve the soul or life of upright men from those that hate and persecute them. Jarchi illustrates it by (^{<0223>}1 Samuel 22:23); the Targum is,

“men that shed blood hate integrity; but the upright seek it.”

Ver. 11. *A fool uttereth all his mind*, etc.] At once; tells all he knows, all that is in his breast; whatever he thinks, and all that he intends to do; what or whom he loves or hates. Or, “a fool brings out all his wrath”; so the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions: he cannot restrain it, nor hide it; it breaks out at once, even all of it, and is soon known, as in (^{<0226>}Proverbs 12:16);

but a wise [man] keepeth it in till afterwards; reserves his mind, and thoughts, and designs, to himself; and does not discover them until a proper opportunity offers, when to disclose them is most to advantage; or he restrains his wrath and anger, defers showing it to a proper time, when it may answer a better purpose, and he may do it without sin.

Ver. 12. *If a ruler hearken to lies*, etc.] To men that tell them in order to soothe and flatter him, or to hurt the character and reputation of others, that they may raise their own: rulers should not listen to and encourage such sort of persons; for, as lying lips do not become a prince, so it is not right to have liars about him; David would not suffer such to dwell in his court, (^{<0207>}Psalms 101:7);

all his servants [are] wicked; or the greatest part of them: for a ruler of such a disposition will take none but such into his service, that flatter him, and calumniate others; and such a conduct, being pleasing and agreeable to him, is a temptation to his ministers to act the same wicked part; as is a prince, such are his courtiers; his example has a great influence upon them.

Ver. 13. *The poor and the deceitful man meet together*, etc.] Or “the usurer”^{<0811>}; who by usury, by fraud and deception, is possessed of the mammon of unrighteousness, and is become rich; he and the poor man meet together; and so the sense is the same as in (^{<0222>}Proverbs 22:2).

the Lord lighteneth both their eyes; with the light of natural life, and with the light of natural reason, (^{<0004>}John 1:4,9); and so is the same as being “the Maker of them all”, in the above place; or he bestows his providential favours on both; causes his sun to shine upon the rich and poor, the wicked

and the righteous, (^{<4156>}Matthew 5:45). Or it may be understood of the light of grace; for though, for the most part, God chooses and calls the poor of the world, and lightens their eyes with the light of his grace, when not many wise and noble are called and enlightened; yet this is not restrained wholly to men of one and the same condition of life; yea, God sometimes calls and enlightens publicans, tax gatherers, and extortioners, as Matthew and Zacchaeus.

Ver. 14. *The king that faithfully judgeth the poor*, etc.] That truly executes justice and judgment among all his subjects, particularly the poor, who are too often neglected, because they cannot afford persons to plead their cause: such a king was Solomon; and especially the Messiah, of whom he was a type, (^{<4974>}Psalm 72:1,2,4,12,13);

his throne shall be established for ever; be secure to him as long as he lives, and to his posterity after; justice to all men, and mercy to the poor, are the support of a prince's throne; (see ^{<4118>}Proverbs 20:28 25:5).

Ver. 15. *The rod and reproof give wisdom*, etc.] Are the means of giving wisdom to a child, reprov'd by its parent with the rod; and of driving out foolishness from him, and of making him wiser for the time to come; he shunning those evils for which he was before corrected, (^{<4025>}Proverbs 22:15); So the children of God grow wiser by the corrections and chastisements of their heavenly Father, which are always for their good; and he is a man of wisdom that hearkens to the rod, and to him that has appointed it, and learns the proper instructions from it, (^{<3119>}Micah 6:9);

but a child left to [himself] bringeth his mother to shame; a child that has the reins thrown upon his neck, is under no restraint of parents, but suffered to take his own way, is left to do his own will and pleasure; he does those things which his parents are ashamed of, one as well as another; though the mother is only mentioned, being generally most fond and indulgent, and most criminal in suffering children to have their own wills and ways; and so has the greater share in the shame that follows on such indulgences.

Ver. 16. *When the wicked are multiplied*, etc.] Or "are in authority"^{f812}; as the word is rendered, (^{<4110>}Proverbs 29:2);

transgression increaseth; among the common people, being encouraged by their wicked rulers, whose examples they follow; or as the wicked

themselves increase, in numbers, in age, in power, and riches, their sins increase too;

but the righteous shall see their fall, from their places of authority and power, of honour, riches, and grandeur, into a low and despicable condition, into ruin and destruction; and that with pleasure, because of the glory of God, his wisdom, justice, truth, and faithfulness, displayed therein; (see ^{<1580>}Psalm 58:10).

Ver. 17. *Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest*, etc.] Ease of mind, satisfaction and contentment, freedom from all anxious thoughts and cares; the correction being taken in good part, and succeeding according to wish and design;

yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul; by his tenderness to his parents, obedience to them, and respect for them; by his prudent behaviour among men; by his sobriety, diligence, and industry in his calling; by his fear of God, and walking in his ways; than which nothing can give a greater delight and pleasure to religious parents.

Ver. 18. *Where [there is] no vision, the people perish*, etc.] That is, “no prophecy”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; and which is often the sense of the word, as the vision of Isaiah is the prophecy of Isaiah; and, in the New Testament, prophesying is often put for preaching; and here vision, or prophecy, signifies the public ministering of the word and ordinances, and want of persons to administer them; no expounder, as the Septuagint version; or interpreter, as the Arabic. This was the case in the latter end of Eli’s life, (^{<0901>}1 Samuel 3:1); in Asa’s times, and before, (^{<445B>}2 Chronicles 15:3); in the Babylonish captivity, (^{<3075>}Ezekiel 7:26 ^{<310>}Lamentations 2:9); in the times of Antiochus, (^{<174D>}Psalm 74:9); when John the Baptist and Christ first came preaching the word, (^{<405>}Matthew 9:36); and now is the case of the Jews, and will be till the time of their conversion. So it was in the Gentile world, before the Gospel was brought into it, (^{<4473>}Acts 17:30); and so it now is in those places where the seven churches of Asia were; and in all Asia, which once heard the word of the Lord, even all that large country; and now it is not heard at all in it, but covered with Mahometan darkness. And this is the case in all Popish countries, subject to the see of Rome, where the word of God is not preached to the people, nor suffered so much as to be read by them; and even in reformed churches, for the most part, only a little morality is preached, and not the Gospel of Christ; so that here the people are

perishing for lack of knowledge, (²⁰⁰⁶Hosea 4:6); and when the witnesses will be slain, who now prophesy in sackcloth, there will be an entire stop put to prophesying or preaching for a while; but, when they shall rise, the earth will be filled with the knowledge of God, through the ministry of the word. Now, where there is no preaching, men perish in their sins; the word being the ordinary means of grace, of regeneration, conversion, faith, and salvation; without which, men know nothing of Christ, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by him: and where there is preaching, yet it not being of the right kind, there is no spiritual knowledge spread by it, no food for souls under it; they perish with hunger, as the prodigal did, or are in starving and famishing circumstances; no comfort for the people of God, who perish in their comforts under such a ministry, (^{481B}1 Corinthians 8:11); and poison is spread among others; false doctrine eats as a canker, and destroys souls. Again, where there is right vision and prophecy, or true preaching of the word, and that is despised and neglected, men perish notwithstanding; as the Jews of old, and all deniers and contemners of the word now, (^{443B}Acts 13:41 ^{501B}Hebrews 2:3); and this seems to be intended here, as appears by the following clause. The word translated “perish” has various senses, which agree with the text. It may be rendered, “the people become idle”, or “cease”^{f813}; from the performance of good works, grow dissolute in their manners, and licentious in their practices: or “they become refractory”^{f814}; fierce, obstinate, and ungovernable, and rebel against their superiors: or they are “made naked”^{f815}; stripped of their ornaments; of their privileges, civil as well as religious, which is often the case where no vision is; as well as of all virtue and morality, and of the blessing and protection of God;

but he that keepeth the law, happy [is] he: not the moral law, which no man can keep perfectly, but the law of faith. It may be rendered, “happy is he that observes doctrine”^{f816}; the doctrine of the Gospel, where it is preached; that attends to it, values and esteems it, receives it by faith, and with meekness; blessed is he, blessed are his eyes and ears; he sees wondrous things out of this law or doctrine, and he hears and knows the joyful sound, which brings salvation and eternal life unto him!

Ver. 19. *A servant will not be corrected by words,* etc.] Not by them only, especially one that is of a servile, surly, and untractable disposition; otherwise a good servant, and well disposed to his master, and willing to serve him, and promote his interest, a word is sufficient for such an one; when he is bid to go, he goes; or to come, he comes, (^{480B}Matthew 8:9); or

if he has done wrong, and his fault is told him, he will amend another time; whereas a rough ill natured servant will not regard words, but must have blows to correct him;

for though he understand; what his master says, and what is his will, and knows he has done wrong, and ought to do otherwise, which is an aggravation of sin:

he will not answer; own his fault and promise to do better for the future; through the surliness of his nature, and contempt of his master, whom he does not think worthy of an answer: so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “he despises to answer”; thus Job was used by his servants, (^{<896>}Job 19:16); There is an answering which is forbidden servants, (^{<309>}Titus 2:9); but this what becomes them, and is expressive of their respect and reverence to their masters, and their ready, hearty, and cheerful obedience to them; and which especially should be in Christian servants to Christian masters, (^{<500>}1 Timothy 6:1 ^{<405>}Ephesians 6:5-7).

Ver. 20. *Seest thou a man [that is] hasty in his words*, etc.] Swift to speak either before God or men; that takes upon him to speak upon a subject, or return an answer to a question, before he has thoroughly thought of it, and well considered it, and digested what he should say; (see ^{<208>}Ecclesiastes 5:2 ^{<309>}James 1:19); or “hasty in matters”^{F817}; in his business; runs rashly and precipitately into things, without duly considering within himself what is right and proper to be done, and without taking the advice of others;

[there is] more hope of a fool than of him; of one that has not the gift of elocution, or not so much sagacity in business, and yet takes time to think, and advises with others.

Ver. 21. *He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child*, etc.] In a very tender and affluent way uses him with great familiarity; makes him sit at table, with him, feeds him with dainties, and clothes him in the most handsome manner, as if he was one of his own children:

shall have him become [his] son at the length: he will expect to be used as a son; he will not care to do any servile work, or anything, especially that is hard and laborious; he will be for supplanting the son and heir, and think to inherit all himself; or, however, become proud, haughty, and saucy. Jarchi interprets this of the evil imagination, or the corruption of nature, which is in a man from a child; which, if cherished and not subdued, wilt in the issue rule over a man: and some apply it to the body; which, if delicately

pampered, and not kept under, will be master of the soul, instead of servant to it, and its members be instruments of unrighteousness.

Ver. 22. *An angry man stirreth up strife*, etc.] In families, neighbourhoods, communities, churches, and commonwealths; that is, one that is given to anger, and gives way to it, in whom it prevails and rules;

and a furious man aboundeth in transgression; or, “a master of wrath or fury”^{f818}; one much addicted to it: or, “the husband of wrath”: wedded to it, as a man to his wife: or, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “who is easy to be angry”; is easily provoked, wrath rises up in him at once; this leads him on to many sins, as cursing, swearing, murder,

Ver. 23. *A man’s pride shall bring him low*, etc.] As the pride of Adam, in affecting to be as gods, knowing good and evil; he lost the image of God; was brought into a state of darkness and ignorance, into debt and to a dunghill, to beggary and rags; filled with loathsome diseases, and left in thralldom and bondage to sin and Satan; and so all his posterity were brought into the same low estate. This might be exemplified in particular persons, in Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, and others; and, as will be in that monster of pride, the man of sin and antichrist; who will be humbled and brought low in the midst of his pride and boasting, (^{f687}Revelation 18:7,8);

but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit; not who are humble in appearance only, or merely in words, having a show of humility, a voluntary and affected one; but really in their hearts; whose spirits are humble and contrite; who are so in spiritual things, and are made so by the Spirit of God: they are such who are truly sensible of sin; of their folly, and want of spiritual knowledge; of their impotence, and weakness to do anything that is spiritually good; of their spiritual poverty, and want of righteousness; who see that salvation is all of grace; and that whatever they have is owing to the grace of God; that they are deficient in all their duties, and these insufficient to justify them before God; who submit to the righteousness of Christ, and give all the glory of salvation to the grace of God. These, as they are honourable, being clothed with humility, which is itself an ornament of great price; so they are honoured with more grace from the Lord; they are beautified with the garments of salvation; they have the honour to have the spiritual and gracious presence of God, and fellowship with him, who dwells with such as are of an humble spirit: these are the meek and lowly, that shall inherit the new earth, and reign as kings

with Christ in it; and the poor in spirit, to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs: and this honour is durable, they shall always abide in it; the grace they have, which makes them glorious, springs up unto eternal life; and the glory they shall have is an eternal weight of glory, a crown of glory that fadeth not away: for so the words may be rendered, “the humble in spirit shall lay hold on glory”^{f819} or “honour”; possess it and enjoy it: or rather “shall retain”^{f820} it; shall hold it fast, as the word is translated in (~~2118~~ Proverbs 3:18 11:16); The sum of the proverb, in both parts, is the same with the words of Christ, often used by him, (~~2132~~ Matthew 23:12 ~~2141~~ Luke 14:11 18:14).

Ver. 24. *Whoso is partner with a thief*, etc.] That robs and steals, and raises away another man’s property; which to do is sinful and contrary to the law of God, and punishable by it; and so it is to join with him in the theft, or to devise, or consent unto it; or to receive the stolen goods, or to hide and conceal them; or to hide the thief, or the theft, and not declare them; (see ~~2108~~ Psalm 50:18 ~~2123~~ Isaiah 1:23). Such an one

hateth his own soul; that is, he is not careful of it, he is not concerned for its welfare as he should be; for otherwise no man, properly speaking, hates his own flesh or body, and much less his soul; but he is negligent of the good of it, and, for the sake of the mammon of unrighteousness, runs the risk of the ruin of it; by which he shows that he loves the world more than his own soul; when the profit of the whole world is nothing to the soul of man, (~~2166~~ Matthew 16:26); (see ~~2186~~ Proverbs 8:36);

he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth [it] not; or “does not declare it”^{f821}; he heareth the cursing of those that have lost their goods, and yet he does not declare where they are, and who is the author of the theft, though he knows; or, being suspected of being concerned in it, or, at least, of knowing who did it, he is had before a civil magistrate, and an oath is given him, which he takes, and yet he conceals the matter: which is an aggravation of his sin, and brings ruin to his soul. So the Targum,

“an oath is determined (or brought to him) and he confesseth not.”

Some understand this of a distinct evil, of hearing cursing and swearing, and taking the name of God in vain, and blasphemy against him; yet, through fear of incurring the displeasure of men, and being reckoned a busy body, or through indifference and want of zeal for the glory of God, do not discover it, or inform of it, to a proper person, for the punishment

of such; (see ^{<f801>}Leviticus 5:1); and render the words ^{f822}, as “he that is partner with a thief hateth his own soul; [so] he that heareth cursing, and betrayeth it not.”

Ver. 25. *The fear of man bringeth a snare*, etc.] Either that which is subjectively in man; not a divine fear, or the fear of God, that grace which is put into the heart, for that leads to no snare, but tends to life; but a human fear, a servile one, a distrust of the power and providence, grace and goodness, of God, which has torment in it; which brings into bondage, and into many distresses and difficulties, and is opposed to trust in the Lord: or objectively, which has man for its object; a fear of losing the favour and friendship of men, of not having honour and applause from them; and a fear of their reproaches and reviling; of the wrath of men, of persecution from them, and of sufferings by them, even death itself; which has been sometimes a snare to ministers of the word, to drop or conceal some truths of it; and to professors of religion, not to embrace, own, and profess them; as many, through fear of the Jews, would not profess Jesus to be the Messiah, though they knew he was, (^{<f873>}John 7:13 9:21 12:42,43); yea, such a fear has been a snare to the best of men, and leads into temptation and sin; as particularly Abraham and Peter, (^{<f812>}Genesis 12:12,13 20:11 ^{<f819>}Matthew 26:69-74);

but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe; that trusts in the Lord as the God of nature and providence, and the God of all grace, for all mercies, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, and leaves himself and case with him; such an one is safe from men, and the fear of them, and from snares and temptations, and sin and mischief, which come by them: or, “shall be lifted up on high”^{f823}; he is upon a high rock, firm and sure; he dwells on high, his place of defence is the munition of rocks; he is in a high tower which is impregnable, in a city of refuge where he is safe; he is as immovable as Mount Zion; he is above the fear of man, or danger from him; he is out of the reach of all his enemies, men or devils; (see ^{<f810>}Proverbs 18:10).

Ver. 26. *Many seek the ruler’s favour*, etc.] Or “face”^{f824}; are very desirous of being admitted into his presence, and of having his company and conversation; of having an opportunity to ask a favour of him, and of receiving honour from him, and of gaining him on their side, to take their part in a cause depending; (see ^{<f816>}Proverbs 19:6);

but [every] man's judgment [cometh] from the Lord; who has the hearts of kings and rulers in his hand, and directs them in bestowing their favours, and in determining causes; so that all things are ultimately from the Lord; and therefore it is best to seek unto him, and trust in him: or the state and condition and circumstances of men, as to riches and honour, and the like, are all from the Lord, according as he sees fit; who sets up one and pulls down another, according to his pleasure.

Ver. 27. *An unjust man [is] an abomination to the just*, etc.] Not his person, but his actions, his unrighteous actions, his ungodly life and conversation; which a man, holy, just, and good, loathes and abhors, and cannot forbear expressing his abhorrence of; and therefore shuns his company, and will have no fellowship with him. And, on the other hand,

[he that is] upright in the way [is] abomination to the wicked; that man that is upright in heart and life, that walks according to the rule of the divine word, in the path of holiness, in the way of truth and righteousness, he is abhorred by a wicked man; he cannot have any pleasure in his company; he is under some awe and restraint which is disagreeable to him; and he cannot bear the reproofs he gives him; besides, if he is silent, his whole life and conversation carries in it a tacit reproof, conviction, and condemnation of him. There always has been a mutual enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, (^{<DOCID>}Genesis 3:15).

CHAPTER 30

Ver. 1. *The words of Agur the son of Jakeh*, etc.] Here begins, according to Aben Ezra, the fourth part of this book; though, according to others, it is the fifth; (see Gill on “^{<3027>}Proverbs 22:17”); Who this Agur was is a matter of doubt; some of the Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Gersom, and likewise some Christian writers^{f825}, take him to be Solomon himself, who calls himself Agur, which is said to signify “a gatherer”; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “the words of the gatherer, the son of the vomiter”; just as he calls himself Koheleth, or “the caller”, or “preacher”, (^{<2006>}Ecclesiastes 1:1,12). The reason given of this name is, because he gathered wisdom and the law^{f826}; or, as Jarchi, he gathered wisdom, and vomited it; that is, delivered it out to others; so he did, he sought after and attained to more wisdom than any before him, for he was wiser than all men; and it may be added, that he “gathered” silver and gold, and the treasure of kings, and increased in riches more than any before him, (^{<2013>}Ecclesiastes 1:13,16 2:8). But then all this does not agree with the person whose words these are; for he speaks of himself as being very ignorant, and as not having learned wisdom, (^{<3018>}Proverbs 30:2,3); and desires neither poverty nor riches, (^{<3018>}Proverbs 30:8); besides, the word “Agur” signifies not “a gatherer”, but “gathered”, as Hillerus^{f827} renders it; and so Cocceius, who thinks also that Solomon is meant, yet not for the above reasons, but translates the clause thus, “the words of the recollected son of the obedient”; as if it described Solomon the son of David, the obedient one, the man after God’s own heart, when he was restored by repentance; but it seems better, with Aben Ezra, to understand this of some very good, knowing, and worthy man, who lived in those times, either before the times of Solomon, or in the same, whose pithy sayings and sentences he had a great regard for, and joined them to his own; or who lived in the times of Hezekiah, or before, whose proverbs were collected by his men, and added to those of Solomon’s they had copied in the preceding chapters; (see ^{<3026>}Proverbs 25:1);

[even] the prophecy; or “burden”^{f828}, as many of the prophecies are called; it designs something received from the Lord, taken up and carried to others; so Balaam is said to “take up his parable”, (^{<0237>}Numbers 23:7). Here it does not design a prediction of future events, unless it can be thought that there is in the following words a prophecy of the Messiah; but

an instruction, a declaration of things useful and profitable; so preaching in the New Testament is called prophesying often, (^{<640>}1 Corinthians 14:1,3,4). This is a part of the word of God, of the prophecy which came not by the will of man, but by the inspiration of God, (^{<6019>}2 Peter 1:19-21); which prophecy

the man spake, this excellent good man Agur, who was divinely inspired; (see ^{<0418>}Numbers 24:3 ^{<0211>}2 Samuel 23:1);

unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal; who were either the children of Agur, whom he instructed in the knowledge of divine things; or they were, as Aben Ezra, either his companions with whom he conversed about sacred things, or his disciples who inquired of him about these things, and learned them of him. Some think^{f829} these are titles of God himself, to whom Agur directs his speech, and acknowledges his ignorance of the divine Being, whom he might justly call Ithiel and Ucal, that is, “God with me”, and “the mighty One”; and certain it is that Agur does direct a prayer to God, (^{<2107>}Proverbs 30:7-9); And some read these words themselves as a prayer, “let God be with me, and one shall prevail”^{f830}, that is, over all mine enemies; for, if God is on the side of his people, who shall be against them? or, “I shall be able” to do all things through the Lord’s strength, (^{<6831>}Romans 8:31 ^{<3043>}Philippians 4:13); But I rather think the words should be read, as Jarchi observes, “concerning Ithiel and Ucal”^{f831}; that is, concerning the Messiah, to whom these names agree. Ithiel, or “God with me”, is very similar to a phrase used by Christ himself in the days of his flesh, (^{<6493>}John 8:29 16:32). God was with him as the eternal Word, and his only begotten Son, from all eternity, which denotes his co-existence, nearness of union, equality of nature, and distinction of persons; he was with him as Mediator before the world began, in the council of peace, which was between them both; in the covenant of grace made with him, in which all things were agreed upon respecting the salvation of his people; he was with him in the beginning of time down to his incarnation; he was with him in the creation of all things, in the sustentation of them; in the works of providence, and in the government of the church; he was with him during his state of humiliation; in his infancy, to protect him from the malice of Herod; he was with him when disputing with the doctors in the temple, to direct him; he was with him at his baptism, transfiguration, and other times; he was with him throughout his public ministry, from the beginning to the end of it; he did good and healed all manner of diseases, and wrought amazing miracles, God being with him, (^{<6492>}John 3:2) (^{<4408>}Acts 10:38); and

he was with him in his sufferings and at his death; and so he is with him in his exalted state; he raised him from the dead, set him at his own right hand, and ever attends to his prevalent intercession; and will be with him in raising the dead and judging the world. “Ucal”, which has the signification of being able, strong, mighty, and powerful, agrees with Christ, who is the mighty God the most mighty, the Almighty; and which appears by the works he did before his incarnation, as the creation of all things out of nothing, the preservation of all things, and the several wonderful events in which he was; concerned, as the confusion of languages, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, the conducting the children of Israel through the wilderness, with others; also what he did when here on earth, the mighty works and miracles done by him, and especially the great work of man’s redemption, and also the raising of himself from the dead: moreover, what he now does and will do for his people show him to be the mighty One; taking the care of all the churches and providing for them; supplying all the wants of his people, bearing all their burdens, supporting them under all their temptations, and delivering them out of them; strengthening them for his service, protecting them from their enemies, keeping them from falling, raising their dead bodies, and bringing all the sons of God to glory: or if the word should be rendered, as it may, “eaten” or “consumed”^{f832}, it is true of Christ, whose zeal ate him up, (^{<4980>}Psalm 69:9); and who is the antitype of the sacrifice consumed by fire.

Ver. 2. *Surely I am more brutish than [any] man*, etc.] “Every man is [become] brutish in his knowledge”; man in his original state was a knowing creature but sinning lost his knowledge, and “became like the beasts that perish”; hence we read of the “brutish among the people”: but Agur thought himself not only brutish among the rest, but more brutish than any. So Plato^{f833} says of some souls living on earth, that they are **ψηριωδεις**, of a brutish nature; (see ^{<2404>}Jeremiah 10:14) (^{<4940>}Psalm 49:20 94:8). Or I think the words may be rendered, “a brute [am] I [rather] than a man”^{f834}; have more of the brute than of the man, especially in the sight and presence of God; a very beast before him, or in comparison of other wise, holy, and good men; or with respect to the knowledge of spiritual, divine, and heavenly things, (^{<4972>}Psalm 73:22); or “a brute [was] I from [the time]”, or “[ever since I was] a man”^{f835}; as soon as he was born, being born in sin, and like a wild ass’s colt, (^{<4811>}Job 11:12);

and have not the understanding of a man; or “of Adam”^{f836}; who was made after the image of God, which consisted in knowledge as well as

holiness; who knew much of God, his nature, perfections, and persons; of the creatures, and the works of his hands and of all things in nature; but affecting more knowledge than he should lost in a great measure what he had, and brought his posterity in and left them in a state of blindness and ignorance, one of whose sons Agur was: or his meaning is, that he had not the understanding, as not of Adam in innocence, and of prophets and other eminent men of God, so not of ordinary men of those who had, he least share of the knowledge of divine things. Aben Ezra, who takes Ithiel and Ucal to be scholars or companions of Agur, supposes, that they asked him questions concerning the divine Being, nature, and perfections, to which he answers in this strain; showing his insufficiency to give them any instruction or satisfaction in such matters, or to discourse on such sublime subjects: or rather his view was to show the blindness and ignorance of human nature with respect to divine things he was about to treat of; and particularly to observe, that the knowledge of a Saviour, and salvation by him, were not from nature, and attainable by that; and that a man must first know himself, his own folly and ignorance, before he can have any true knowledge of Ithiel and Ucal, the mighty Saviour and Redeemer; of the need of him, and of interest in him. Some think his view is to prove that his words, his prophecy, or what he was about to say, or did say, must be owing entirely to divine inspiration; since he was of himself; and without a divine revelation, so very blind, dark, and ignorant; it could not be owing to any natural sagacity of his, who was more brutish than any; nor to any acquired knowledge, or the instruction of men, since he had none, as follows; and so *yK*, with which the words begin, may be rendered “for” or “because”^{f837}, as it usually is, “for I am more brutish, than any man”, etc.

Ver. 3. *I neither learned wisdom*, etc.] Natural wisdom or philosophy, so as to understand the nature of things, and reason about them in a philosophical manner; or political wisdom, so as to know how to govern states, and manage the affairs of kingdoms; or in a lower sphere to transact the affairs of life to any peculiar advantage; he had not a polite or liberal education: or spiritual and evangelical wisdom; that is, not of himself through the mere strength and force of his genius and natural capacity, or of others; he was not the son of a prophet, nor brought up in the schools of the prophets; he did not learn it, nor was he taught it by men; for this is not acquired by human teaching; it is what comes from above, from heaven, and by the revelation of God;

nor have the knowledge of the holy; or “holies”^{f838}; either of holy persons, such knowledge as holy men of God had; or of the holy angels, not of their nature, capacities, influence and operations; nor such as they have: or rather of the holy Persons in the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit; their nature modes of subsisting, perfections, purposes, and the like; at least not a full and comprehensive one: or of holy things, of the holy Scriptures, and the holy doctrines of them; however, not what is perfect and complete. It may be rendered, “but I have the knowledge of the holy”^{f839}, though he had not the advantage of human literature, nor had ever been under the instructions of men on one account or another, and therefore what he knew, or was about to discourse of, was from God. Some understand this verse and (^{<BIB>}Proverbs 30:2) of Ithiel, or Christ^{f840}, as in the esteem of men, (^{<BIB>}1 Corinthians 1:23 ^{<BIB>}John 7:15).

Ver. 4. *Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?* etc.] That has been thither to fetch knowledge of God and divine things, and has returned to communicate it. Enoch was taken up to heaven before this time: and Elijah, as is very probable, after; but neither of them returned again, to inform mortals what was to be seen, known, and enjoyed there: since, the Apostle Paul was caught up into the third heaven, and came back again; but then the things he heard were such as it was not lawful for a man to utter: and indeed, since the coming of Christ there is no need of any further revelation to be made nor of any such expedition, in order to obtain it, (^{<BIB>}Romans 10:6-8). And, properly speaking, there never was any besides him, whose names are Ithiel and Ucal, that ever did this: he lay in the bosom of the Father, and was privy to his whole mind and will; he descended from heaven to earth not by local motion, but, by assumption of nature; and when he had made known his Father’s will, and done his work, he ascended far above all heavens, and received gifts for men; to fill his churches and ministers with them, in order to communicate and improve spiritual and divine knowledge; and therefore, with great propriety and pertinence, he applies these words to himself, (^{<BIB>}John 3:13);

who hath gathered the wind in his fists? not any mere creature; not any man or set of men; it is not in the power of any, either men or angels, to restrain or let loose the winds at pleasure; nor has Satan, though called the prince of the power of the air, that is, of the devils in the air, any such command of them; none but he that made them can command them to blow, or be still; even he who brings them out of his treasures, and his own son, whom the wind and seas obeyed; see (^{<BIB>}Psalm 135:7 ^{<BIB>}Matthew

8:26,27 14:32); The Heathens^{f841} themselves are so sensible of this, that the power of the winds only belongs to God, that they have framed a deity they call Aeolus; whom the supreme Being has made a kind of steward or store keeper of the winds, and given him a power to still or raise them as he pleases^{f842};

who hath bound the waters in a garment? either the waters above, which are bound in the thick clouds as in a garment which hold them from pouring out; or the waters of the sea, which are as easily managed by the Lord as an infant by its parent, and is wrapped about with a swaddling band, (^{<8308>}Job 26:8 37:8,9). But can any creature do this? none but the mighty God; and his almighty Son the Ithiel and Ucal, who clothes the heavens with blackness, and makes sackcloth their covering: even he who is the Redeemer of this people, and has the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to them (^{<2810>}Isaiah 50:2-4);

who hath established all the ends of the earth? fixed the boundaries of the several parts of the world, Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and the several countries in them? settled the foundations of the earth, and secured the banks and borders of it from the raging of the sea? None but these next mentioned; (see ^{<8304>}Job 38:4,5);

what [is] his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? if thou surest it is a mere man that does all these things tell his name; or, if he be dead, say what is the name of his son or of any of his family; so Jarchi and others interpret it: or rather, since it is the Lord alone and his own proper Son, to whom these things can be ascribed say what is his name; that is, his nature and perfections which are incomprehensible and ineffable; otherwise he is known by his name Jehovah and especially as his name is proclaimed in Christ and manifested by him and in his Gospel: and seeing he has a son of the same nature with him, and possessed of the same perfections, co-essential, and co-existent, and every way equal to him, and a distinct person from him, say what is his nature and perfections also; declare his generation and the manner of it; his divine filiation, and in what class it is; things which are out of the reach of human capacity, and not to be expressed by the tongue of men and angels; see (^{<4127>}Matthew 11:27 16:15-17). Otherwise, though his name for a while was a secret, and he was only called the seed of the woman and of Abraham, (^{<0085>}Genesis 3:15 22:18 32:29 ^{<0737>}Judges 13:17,18); yet he had many names given him under the Old Testament; as Shiloh, Immanuel, the Wonderful, Counsellor, the

mighty God, the everlasting Father, and Prince of peace; the Lord our righteousness, and the Man, the Branch: and under the New Testament, Jesus the Saviour, Christ the Anointed; the Head of the church, the Judge of the world; the Word of God, and King of kings, and Lord of lords. This Scripture is a proof of Christ's being the eternal Son of God; of his equality with his divine Father as such, their name and nature being alike ineffable; of his co-existence with his Father as such; and of his omnipresence and omnipotence, expressed by the phrases here used of ascending, etc. and of his distinct personality from the Father; the same question being distinctly put of him as of the Father. Some render the last clause, "dost thou know?"^{f843} thou dost not know God and his Son, their being and perfections are not to be known by the light of nature, only by revelation, and but imperfectly.

Ver. 5. *Every word of God [is] pure*, etc.] The whole word of God. "All Scripture", given by inspiration of God, to which Agur directs, as giving the best account of God, of his name, nature, and perfections; of his Son, person, offices, and grace; being pure, very pure, "purified"^{f844} like silver, purified in a furnace of earth. The whole of Scripture is pure, free from all falsehood and error; coming from the God of truth, who cannot lie, and therefore called "the Scriptures of truth": every promise is pure as well as precious, made without dissimulation, faithfully performed, and all yea and amen in Christ; every doctrine is pure, free from the mixtures and inventions of men; the sincere milk of the word; consistent and all of a piece, not yea and nay; and tending to promote purity of heart and life; wholesome words, and doctrines according to godliness; see (^{<9126>}Psalm 12:6 18:30 119:140);

he [is] a shield unto them that put their trust in him; not the word, but God, whose the word is; and which represents him as a proper object of trust, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual, at all times; and as a shield to protect such, by his power and grace, from all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, and also from all errors and false doctrines; (see ^{<488>}Psalm 3:3 5:12 18:35 84:9,11,12).

Ver. 6. *Add thou not unto his words*, etc.] To the words of God; as the Jews did, by joining their oral law, or the traditions of the elders, to the written word, and preferring them before it; and as the Papists, by making their unwritten traditions, and the sense and determinations of their church, equal to the Scriptures; and as all enthusiasts do, who set up their

pretended dreams, visions, revelations, and prophecies, upon a foot with the word of God, or as superior to it; whereas that is, and that only, the rule and standard of faith and practice, and is a sufficient and perfect one; (see ^(f845)Deuteronomy 4:2);

lest he reprove thee; that is, God; either by words or by blows, by threatenings and denunciations of his wrath and displeasure; or by chastisements and corrections for such daring pride, blasphemy, and wickedness; those who add to his words, he threatens to add plagues unto them, (^(f845)Revelation 22:18);

and thou be found a liar; a forger, speaker, and spreader of doctrinal lies, such doctrines as are contrary to the word of truth; not being built on that, but upon human inventions, and additions to it.

Ver. 7. *Two [things] have I required of thee*, etc.] Or, “have asked of thee ^(f845), O God”; as may be supplied, for the words are addressed to him. The following is a prayer made unto him, which contains the two requests here referred to; his requests are not many, his words are few; he did not make long prayers, or expect to be heard for much speaking;

deny me [them] not before I die; not that he thought he was near his end; nor is it his sense that he desired some time or other, at least before he died, that he might have these two requests granted him after mentioned; for what are poverty and riches, or convenient food, to a man just dying? but his meaning is, that he might be thus favoured as long as he lived; that all the while he was in the world, he might be kept from sin, and be free from anxious worldly thoughts and cares, having a moderate competency of good things: faith in prayer will have no denial; a wrestling Jacob will not let the angel go without a blessing; importunity in prayer gets much from the hands of God; “the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much”, (^(f845)James 5:16).

Ver. 8. *Remove far from me vanity and lies*, etc.] This is the “first” request, to be preserved from sin, in general; which is a vain, lying, and deceitful thing; promising pleasure, profit, liberty, and impunity, which it does not give. Agur desires to have vain thoughts removed out of his mind, vain words from his mouth, and vain actions from his life and conversation; to have his eyes turned from beholding vanity, and his feet from walking in it; and his affections taken off from the vain things of the world, the lusts, pleasures, profits, and honours of it; as well as to be kept from all errors

and false doctrines, which are lies in hypocrisy; with which men that lie in wait to deceive would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect: Agur conscious of his own weakness, and proneness to evil, desires the Lord would not lead him into temptation, but deliver him from all evil, doctrinal and practical. Some understand this of the forgiveness of sin; which is sometimes expressed by a putting or removing it away, (^{<1073>}2 Samuel 7:13) (^{<1932>}Psalm 103:12);

give me neither poverty nor riches; this is the “second” request, not to be extremely poor nor too rich; but to be in a middle state between both, neither rich nor poor; which Horace^{f846} calls the golden mean, and which Agur wisely judged to be the happiest state; most free from care, least liable to temptation, and the best situation to serve the Lord in: a like wish was made by Theognis^{f847}, I neither love to be rich,

“nor desire it; but to live on a little, having no evil;”

so Martial^{f848}. Both riches and poverty are of God; men are rich or poor, as the Lord pleases; he suffers poverty in some, and gives riches to others: Agur deprecates both, as having their separate, peculiar, snares and temptations; though no doubt this request was made with submission to the will of God; and not as considering either of them as evils in themselves, but as they might be attended with bad consequences, and what is next mentioned being more eligible;

feed me with food convenient for me; not merely what was agreeable to his palate, suitable to his constitution, and sufficient for nature; nor for him personally, but for his family also; and what was proper and suitable to the condition and circumstances in which he was, and to the rank and quality he held, whether in a more private or in a more public capacity. Some render it, “the food of my allowance”^{f849}; what is allotted and appointed for me It seems to be the same which Job calls his “necessary food”, and Christ “our daily bread”: it takes in both food and raiment, which having, men should be contented with; see (^{<1822>}Job 23:12 ^{<1061>}Matthew 6:11 ^{<1068>}1 Timothy 6:8). The allusion seems to be to the stated measure of food allowed to servants by the day, or rather by the month, called “demensum”, and which was but small and scanty^{f850}; yet with this Agur could be content.

Ver. 9. *Lest I be full, and deny [thee]*, etc.] This is the dangerous consequence of riches, and the temptation they expose men unto; who,

being full of the things of this world, are tempted to deny the Lord; not his being and perfections directly, but chiefly his providence; to deny that what they have, they have received of him, but attribute it to their own care, diligence, and industry; and now think they can live without him, without any dependence on his providence, having a large affluence of the things of life: yea, they may be said to deny him, when they forget the bounties of his providence; are not thankful to him for them; that flatter themselves with a continuance of them, without any regard to him, as if he had no concern in the affairs of life; (see ^{<f825>}Deuteronomy 32:15);

and say, Who [is] the Lord? as Pharaoh did, (^{<f826>}Exodus 5:2). I am not obliged to him; I can live without him, I have enough of my own;

or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God [in vain]; this is the snare that attends poverty; men, for want of food and raiment, are tempted to steal from their neighbours, which is a sin against the law of God, the eighth command; and then to cover the theft, when an oath is offered to purge them from the charge and suspicion of it, they take it, and so are guilty of false swearing, or taking the name of God not only in vain, but falsely, and so become guilty of the breach of the third command. Agur, a good man, is desirous he might not be exposed to temptations to such evils, and especially which so affected the honour and glory of God.

Ver. 10. *Accuse not a servant unto his master,* etc.] Wrongly, rashly, and without any foundation, nor for any trifling thing; unless it be in a case of moment and importance, when his master's business is sadly neglected, or he is injured in his property by him: especially care should be taken not to calumniate a servant, to abuse him with the tongue, as the word ^{<f851>} signifies; the circumstance he is in should be considered, as a servant; and how severe masters are apt to be towards them, and therefore little matters should be hid from them; and much less should they be aggravated, and least of all should falsehoods be told of them. So Doeg the Edomite accused David to Saul, and the Pharisees accused the disciples of Christ to their Master, (^{<f827>}1 Samuel 22:9) (^{<f828>}Matthew 15:2); the apostle's advice is good, and agrees with Agur's, (^{<f840>}Romans 14:4);

lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty; or, "and thou shouldest sin"^{<f852>}; that is, afterwards; and so the curse come upon thee he has wished for: or the sense is, lest he should curse thee before men, and hurt thy character and reputation; or imprecate a curse from the Lord, which he may suffer to come upon thee for sin. Aben Ezra interprets this of a

servant, that flies from Heathen countries to the land of Israel, to be made a proselyte of; who should not be discovered, and returned to his old master.

Ver. 11. [*There is*] a generation [*that*] curseth their father, etc.] A sort of men that neither fear God nor regard men; and are so inhuman as to be without natural affections to their parents; have no reverence of them, love to them, nor give them any honour or obedience; so far from it, that they curse their father that begot them; imprecate on him all the evils in life they can think of, and wish him out of the world;

and doth not bless their mother; cannot give her a good word, who bore them, and brought them up in the most tender and indulgent manner; yea, so unnatural as to curse her also, for that is intended by this way of speaking; (see ~~2017~~ Proverbs 30:17).

Ver. 12. [*There is*] a generation [*that are*] pure in their own eyes, etc.] Not in the eyes of God, who sees the heart, and all the impurities of it, as well as of life and conversation; nor in the eyes of others, though such may appear outwardly righteous before men; but in their own eyes, in their own conceit and imagination, trusting in themselves that they are righteous: but such have not their eyes opened or enlightened to see the plague of their own hearts, the spirituality of the law of God, the perfection of righteousness that requires; nor the righteousness and holiness of God himself; nor the imperfection and insufficiency of their own; did they, they would not seem pure and righteous to themselves. No man is pure by nature, or through anything done by them; but by the grace of God, and through the blood and righteousness of Christ; and such are far from being pure in their own eyes, or as considered in themselves: but those who are pure neither by nature nor by grace, yet think they are so. There were some such in Agur's time, and such were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time; there were a generation of them; and there are of the same sort in our days, as Papists, Perfectionists, and all self-justiciaries; see (~~2018~~ Luke 18:9);

and [yet] is not washed from their filthiness; their native, original, and universal pollution by sin they have from their birth, and which is increased by numerous actual transgressions; and from which none are or can be washed but those who are born of water and of the Spirit, or are washed with the washing of regeneration; and are washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb, whose blood cleanses from all sin; and are arrayed with the fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints, which is the

righteousness of Christ imputed to them: whatsoever is short of these leaves men unwashed from their filthiness, whatever opinion they may have of themselves; (see ^{<389D>}Job 9:30,31) (^{<2422>}Jeremiah 2:22).

Ver. 13. [*There is*] a generation, *O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.*] Above others, on whom they look with scorn and contempt; as those do who have more riches than others, and boast of them; they despise their poor neighbours, and disdain to look upon them: and such also who have more knowledge and wisdom than others, or at least think so; they are puffed up in their fleshly minds, and say of the illiterate or less knowing, as the proud Pharisees did, “this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed”: and likewise those who fancy themselves more holy and righteous than others; these, in a scornful manner, say, “stand by thyself, I am holier than thou”; and thank God they are not as other men are, as publicans and sinners; (see ^{<289D>}Proverbs 19:4,7 ^{<387D>}John 7:49 ^{<287D>}Isaiah 65:4 ^{<281D>}Luke 18:11, 12). Hence Pliny^{f853} says, that in the eyebrows there is a part of the mind; those especially show haughtiness; that pride has a receptacle elsewhere, but here it has its seat; it is bred in the heart, but here it comes and here it hangs: wherefore Juvenal^{f854} calls pride and haughtiness, “grande supercilium”; and proud haughty persons are said to be supercilious.

Ver. 14. [*There is*] a generation whose teeth [are as] swords, etc.] As sharp as swords; like such the beasts of prey have; cruel, barbarous, and inhuman creatures; (see ^{<357D>}Psalm 57:4);

and their jaw teeth as knives; exceeding sharp and biting:

to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from [among] men: by their tyranny, oppression, and cruelty, to deprive them of the little they have; and even to take away their lives from them, and utterly destroy them; of this disposition are all tyrants and persecutors: such were Rome Pagan, compared to a red dragon in the times of the ten Heathen persecutions; and such is Rome Papal, signified by a beast, like a leopard, bear, and lion; and which has been drunk with the blood of the saints.

Ver. 15. *The horse leech hath two daughters, [crying], Give, give,* etc.] Or “the blood sucker”^{f855}; so it began to be called in the times of Pliny^{f856}, to which the last generation of men may well be compared; blood thirsty creatures, that never have enough, and are not satisfied with the flesh of men, nor with their blood; and such particularly the Papists are: and not

only this generation of men, but there are three or four things besides, which resemble the horse leech for its insatiableness; for the horse leech has not two daughters only, but more. Some, by her two daughters, understand the two forks of its tongue, which some naturalists say it has; though later ones, and more diligent inquirers into those things, find it has not; but either with its three teeth, or by the compression of its mouth on all sides, sucks the blood, and will not let go until it is filled with it^{f857}: others have proposed the two sorts of leeches as its daughters, the sea leech, and that which is found in fenny and marshy places. But it is best, by its daughters, to understand such that resemble it, and are like unto it; as those that are of like nature and quality, and do the same things as others, are called their children; (see ~~ⲁⲓⲃⲓ~~ Matthew 23:31,33 ~~ⲁⲓⲃⲓ~~ John 8:44) (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲓ~~ John 3:10); and so the number of its daughters, which are always craving and asking for more, and are never satisfied, are not only two, but more, as follows;

there are three [things]; or, “[yea], there are three [things]”

[that] are never satiated: [yea], four [things] say not, [It is] enough; not two only, but three, and even four, that are quite insatiable and are as follow. The Syriac version renders the whole thus,

“the horse leech hath three beloved daughters; three, “I say”, they are, which are not satisfied; and the fourth says not, It is enough.”

Some, as Abendana observes, interpret it of hell, by a transposition of the letters; because everyone that perverts his ways descends thither. Bochart^{f858} interprets it of fate, and so Noldius^{f859}: and Schultens renders the word, the most monstrous of evils; it signifying in the Arabic language, as he observes, anything monstrous and dreadful; such as wood demons, serpents, and dragons, which devour men and beasts. Suidas^{f860}, by the “horse leech”, understands sin, whose daughters are fornication, envy, and idolatry, which are never satisfied by evil actions, and the fourth is evil concupiscence.

Ver. 16. *The grave*, etc.] Which is the first of the four daughters, or insatiable things, which resemble the horse leech: the grave is the house appointed for all living; it stands ready for them, it is open to receive them when dead; and though such multitudes have been put into it, since death reigned in the world, yet it is not full, it waits for more; nor will its mouth be shut till the last enemy, death, is destroyed; (see ~~ⲁⲓⲃⲓ~~ Proverbs 27:20);

This is an emblem of a covetous man, who enlarges his desire as hell or the grave; and is never satisfied with gold, silver, and increase of substance he has, but is always craving more;

and the barren womb; the second daughter, that cries, Give, give, as Rachel, “give me children, or I die”, (^{<ORIG>}Genesis 30:1): barren women are oftentimes impatient for children, as she was; and importunate, as Hannah; and as the Israelitish women were before the coming of the Messiah, each hoping he might be born of them; especially before it was so clearly known that he should be born of a virgin: though it may be rather the barren womb of harlots is here meant, and who are generally barren, and whose lust is insatiable; and this may be an emblem of lust, which is never satisfied; whether it be a lust of riches, or of honour, or of uncleanness, or of sensual pleasures;

the earth [that] is not filled with water; which is dry and parched, and opens and gapes; and though large quantities of rain may fall upon it, which it greedily drinks in; yet is not seen, nor is it filled with it, but it thirsts for more: this may be an emblem of good men, that have received abundance of the grace of God; and though they thirst not after sin, as they before did, and others do; yet thirst after God, more knowledge of him, and communion with him, and for more grace, like the dry and thirsty land, and cannot have enough of it; see (^{<ORIG>}John 4:13,14 ^{<ORIG>}Psalm 63:1,2 ^{<ORIG>}Hebrews 6:7); or rather of wicked men, who drink up iniquity like water, and yet never have their fill of it to their satisfaction. This is the third thing, and the fourth follows:

and the fire [that] saith not, [It is] enough; but let what fuel will be cast into it, it devours it, and still wants more: by the Egyptians, as Herodotus^{f861} relates, fire is reckoned an animated beast, which devours all it can lay hold on; and when it is filled with food, it dies with that which is devoured by it. Such is the fire of divine wrath, hell fire, in which sinners are, as thorns and briars; and which is unquenchable, everlasting, burns for ever and ever; the Tophet, ordained of old, deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood, kindled by the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, (^{<ORIG>}Isaiah 30:33). These are the four daughters of the horse leech which resemble that in its insatiableness. Jarchi makes mention of some that interpret the horse leech of “sheol”, or the state of the dead; and the two daughters, of paradise and hell; the one says, “Give me the righteous”; and the other says, “Give me the wicked.” Aben Ezra applies

Ver. 18. *There be three [things which] are too wonderful for me*, etc.]

Which were above his reach and comprehension; what he could not find out, nor account for, nor sufficiently admire;

yea, four things which I know not; the way of them; as follows.

Ver. 19. *The way of an eagle in the air*, etc.] And so of any other bird; but this is mentioned, because it flies swiftest, and soars highest: but the way in which it goes is not known, nor can it be seen with the eye; it cuts the air, and passes through it, but leaves no track behind it which may be pointed to, and it may be said, that is the way the eagle took and flew towards heaven out of sight;

the way of a serpent upon a rock; a smooth hard rock; and wonderful it is that it should creep up it without legs; and where it leaves no impression, no footsteps by which it can be traced, as it may in soft and sandy places;

the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; it is marvellous that such a vessel should be supported upon the sea; that it should weather the storms and tempests of it; that it should be steered through the trackless ocean to distant countries; and, particularly, though it makes furrows in the waters, and divides the waves; yet these quickly close again, and there is no path to be seen in which it goes; there is no beaten road made by it, nor by the vast numbers which go the same way, which a man can see with his eyes or follow;

and the way of a man with a maid; or “to a maid”,^{f866}; the many artful ways and methods he uses to get into her company, who is kept recluse; and to convey the sentiments and affections of his heart unto her, to gain her love to him, and obtain her in an honourable way of marriage; or to decoy and deceive her, and draw her into impure and unlawful embraces: it may design the private and secret way of committing fornication with her; which sense seems to be confirmed by (^{<3R11>}Proverbs 30:20). Some of the ancients, particularly Ambrose^{f867}, interpreted the whole of this verse of Christ: “the way of an eagle in the air”, of his ascension to heaven, with men his prey, taken out of the jaws of the enemy; and which is such as is beyond the comprehension of men, that one of so great majesty should vouchsafe to come down from heaven, or ascend thither: “the way of a serpent upon a rock” he understands of the temptations of Satan, the old serpent, with which he attacked Christ, the Rock; but could imprint no footsteps of his malice and wickedness on him; could find nothing in him to

work upon, nor leave any sign behind him, as upon Adam: “the way of a ship in the midst of the sea” he interprets of the church; which though distressed with storms and tempests of persecution and false doctrine, yet cannot suffer shipwreck, Christ being in it: and the last clause he renders as the Vulgate Latin version does, “and the way of a man in youth”; which he explains of the journeys which Christ took, and the ways of virtue he pursued, to do good to the bodies and souls of men, which are so many as not to be numbered. But it may be better interpreted of the wonderful incarnation of Christ, his conception and birth of a virgin; which was a new and unheard of thing, and the way and manner of it quite inscrutable, and more hard and difficult to be understood than any of the rest; for the words may be rendered, “the way of a man in a maid” or “virgin”; that is, the conception of Geber, the mighty man, in the virgin; (see ²⁸¹²Jeremiah 31:22). Gussetius^{f868} gives the mystical sense of the whole, as referring to the ascension of Christ; his coming out of the stony grave; his conversation among the people, like the tumultuous waves; and his incarnation of a virgin.

Ver. 20. *Such [is] the way of an adulterous woman*, etc.] It is equally unknown as the way of a man with a maid; it is difficult to detect her, she takes so much care and caution, and uses so many artful methods to conceal her wickedness from her husband; though she lives in adultery, it is in a most private manner, and carried on so secretly and artfully that she is not easily discovered;

she eateth, and wipeth her mouth; like one that eats what he should not, wipes his mouth that it might not be known or suspected he had ate anything; so such an adulteress commits the sin of adultery; and when she has done looks as grave and demure, and carries it so to her husband and all her friends, as if she was the chastest person upon earth. The allusion may be to harlots, who after an impure congress used to wash themselves^{f869}, and had servants to wait upon them and serve them with water, called from hence “aquarioli”^{f870};

and saith, I have done no wickedness; she says by her behaviour, by her demure looks; and if suspected and challenged with it utterly denies it. This is an emblem of the antichristian whore of Rome, who, though the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth; though guilty of the foulest adultery, that is, the grossest idolatry, yet pretends to be the pure and chaste spouse of Christ; and, under the guise of purity and holiness, and

with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, seduces the minds of many; (see ^{<670>}Revelation 17:1,5 ^{<820>}2 Thessalonians 2:10,11).

Ver. 21. *For three [things] the earth is disquieted*, etc.] The inhabitants of it are made very uneasy;

and for four [which] it cannot bear; they are a load and burden upon it, and are intolerable to those that dwell on it, and make them very uncomfortable.

Ver. 22. *For a servant, when he reigneth*, etc.] Being unfit for it through his education, not having been trained up in and learned the arts of government and maxims of it; and through the disposition of his mind, which is mean, abject, and servile; and as he has been used himself when a servant, so he will use others^{f871} and through his circumstances, being poor, he will take oppressive methods to become rich; and being raised from a low estate, he is the more imperious, proud, and haughty^{f872}; all which and more make his reign intolerable; (see ^{<2090>}Proverbs 19:10 28:3). This may be applied to antichrist, the “servus servorum”, who in a haughty, tyrannical, and insolent manner, exalts himself above all that is called God: and reigns over the kings of the earth, at least has done so, and that in such a manner as was unbearable; deposing kings at pleasure, disposing of their kingdoms, and trampling upon their necks, and making their subjects his vassals; (see ^{<820>}2 Thessalonians 2:4 ^{<672>}Revelation 17:12,13,17,18);

and a fool, when he is filled with meat; as Nabal at his feast, when he behaved so intolerably in his cups towards David and his messengers, that he determined on his destruction, had not Abigail interposed, (^{<0250>}1 Samuel 25:10,11,36); and there are many such fools, who having their bellies full of food, and their heads full of liquor, are very overbearing in company, and give their tongues such a loose as is very disturbing: or this may intend such fools, or wicked men, who are full of wealth and riches, and being purse proud, are exceeding haughty and insolent; set their mouths against the heaven, and blaspheme God that is in it; and their tongues walk through the earth, and spare none, but lash all in an insufferable manner. These disquiet families, neighbourhoods, communities, and commonwealths; (see ^{<0737>}Psalms 73:7-9).

Ver. 23. *For an odious [woman], when she is married*, etc.] Odious for her person, her ugliness, and the deformity of her body; or rather for the ill qualities of her mind, which, while single, she endeavours to conceal, but,

being married, hides them no longer; but becomes imperious, proud, scornful, and malicious, and behaves in an ill natured way to her husband and all about her, to such a degree, that there is no bearing the place where she is;

and an handmaid, that is heir to her mistress; that has got so much into her affections that she leaves all she has to her when she dies, which makes her insufferably proud and vain; or she marries her master after the death of her mistress, and so coming into her place enjoys all she had, but only her wisdom and humility; which being wanting, she behaves in such a manner as to make the whole family uneasy. This might be exemplified in the case of Hagar, the bondmaid of Sarah, a type of those that are under the law of works, and seek the inheritance by it; and who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others, (^{<0160>}Genesis 16:4-6 21:10 ^{<02>}Galatians 4:24-31).

Ver. 24. *There be four [things which are] little upon the earth*, etc.] Small in bulk, that have little bodies, are the lesser sort of animals;

but they [are] exceeding wise; show a great deal of art and wisdom in what they do; or “but they are wise, made wise”^{f873} by the instinct of nature, by the direction of Providence, by which they do things that are surprising. Some versions, that have no regard to the points, read the words, “but their are wiser than the wise”^{f874}; than even wise men; wise men may learn much from the least of creatures; (see ^{<820>}Job 12:7).

Ver. 25. *The ants [are] a people not strong*, etc.] Far from it; what is weaker than an ant? a multitude of them may be destroyed at once, with the crush of a foot. Pliny calls it “minimum animal”, the least animal; and the Arabians use it as a proverb, to call a weak man one weaker than an ant: and there is one sort of ants called “dsar”, so small that one hundred of them will not weigh more than a barley corn^{f875}: they are called a people, because they associate together in great numbers; though small in bulk, and weak as to power and strength; and which is a figure elsewhere used in the sacred Scriptures; (see ^{<2006>}Joel 1:6); and by profane writers, as Homer and Virgil, who speak of bees as a people and nation^{f876}; and of nations of flies, and of flying birds, geese, cranes, and swans^{f877};

yet their prepare their meat in the summer; build granaries with great art and wisdom, carry in grains of corn with great labour and industry, in the summer season, when only to be got, and lay them up against winter.

Phocylides^{f878} the poet says much the same things of them; he calls them a tribe or nation, small but laborious, and says, they gather and carry in their food in summer for the winter, which is a proof of their wisdom. Cicero^{f879} says, the ant has not only sense, but mind, reason, and memory. Aelianus^{f880} ascribes unspeakable wisdom to it; and Pliny^{f881} discourse and conversation; (see Gill on “^{<2166>}Proverbs 6:6-8”). It is a pattern of industry and diligence both as to temporal and spiritual things, (^{<21010>}Ecclesiastes 9:10 ^{<1169>}Matthew 6:19,20).

Ver. 26. *The coney* [are but] *a feeble folk*, etc.] Or “rabbits”; though some think these creatures are not intended, because they are not so little as those with which they are ranked, the ant, the locust, and spider; and because of the places in which they burrow and make their houses, which though in holes and caverns of the earth, yet not in rocky but sandy places; rather therefore it is thought that the mountain mouse, or bear mouse^{f882}, as Jerom calls it, is meant; of which, he says^{f883}, there were great numbers in Palestine, and which had their habitations in the holes of rocks; though if Spain has its name from $\hat{\text{p}}\text{q}$, as some say, because of the multitudes of coney in it; and hence that part of Spain called Celtiberia is called by Catullus^{f884} Cuniculosa; the coney may be thought to be meant by this word, and so it is translated in (^{<8115>}Leviticus 11:5 ^{<5407>}Deuteronomy 14:7 ^{<1418>}Psalm 104:18); the only places where it is elsewhere used; and the word may be derived either from $\hat{\text{p}}\text{s}$, to “cover”, by a change of the letters q and s ; or from Pwq , which has the signification both of breaking, and of hiding and covering, (^{<1015>}Genesis 3:15 ^{<13911>}Psalm 139:11); and this creature breaks the earth and hides itself in it^{f885};

yet make they their houses in the rocks; it is usual with other writers to call the receptacles of any creatures, beasts, birds, or insects, their houses so we read of the house of the ant, and of the tortoise and snail^{f886}; and which, because it carries its house era its back, it is called by Cicero^{f887} “domiporta”; (see ^{<1417>}Psalm 104:17,18); the coney make theirs in the rocks, to cure themselves from their more potent enemies; and thus what they want in strength is made up in sagacity, and by their wise conduct they provide for their safety and protection. These are an emblem of the people of God, who are a weak and feeble people, unable of themselves to perform spiritual duties, to exercise grace, to withstand the corruptions of their nature, resist the temptations of Satan, bear up under afflictive providences, and grapple with spiritual enemies, or defend themselves from

them: but such heavenly wisdom is given them, as to betake themselves for refuge and shelter to Christ, the Rock of Israel; the Rock of salvation, the Rock that is higher than they; a strong one, on which the church is built, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail: and here they are safe from the storms of divine wrath, and the avenging justice of God; from the rage and fury of men, and the fiery darts of Satan; here they dwell safely and delightfully, and have all manner of provision at hand for them; they are the inhabitants of that Rock, who have reason to sing indeed! (see ^{<2336>}Isaiah 33:16 42:11).

Ver. 27. *The locusts have no king*, etc.] These are small creatures also, yet very devouring ones; and consume the fruits of the earth, wherever they come and light; (see ^{<2203>}Exodus 10:13-15); they are very numerous, and move in large bodies, and yet with great regularity and order; which shows the wisdom there is in them by natural instinct, though they have no king to command, guide, and direct them: in this the mystical locusts differ from them, who have a king, whose name is Abaddon, (^{<6911>}Revelation 9:11);

yet they go forth all of them by bands; the Targum is,

“they are all gathered together as one.”

They get together in one place; they associate and join themselves in bands, and keep together, though they have no ruler over them; an emblem of unity, concord, and harmony, let the form of government be what it will, as the best security to a people: and these creatures, when they move from place to place, they move in a body, in a very regular manner; “in precise order”^{f888}, as the words may be rendered, with great exactness, everyone in his proper place, all in rank and file; and though they have no general to marshal them, yet are in, and march in as good order as the most regular army does. So the Arabic version,

“yet in their army, their affairs and manner are in a beautiful disposition;”

indeed they are God’s army, as they are called, (^{<2025>}Joel 2:25); and it is he that gives them their wisdom, instructions, directions, and commission. It is rendered by some, “everyone cutting”; that is, as Kimchi^{f889} interprets it, cutting the green grass and trees; or, “every one dividing”^{f890}; that is, to himself, the prey or spoils, as kings do; (see ^{<2334>}Isaiah 33:4).

Ver. 28. *The spider taketh hold with her hands,* etc.] On the thread she spins, or on the flies and bees she catches in her web. This is a small creature, yet very wise; what a curious thread does she spin! what a fine web does she weave! with what exactness and proportion is it framed! as if she understood the rules of mathematics and architecture;

and is in kings' palaces; as well as in the houses of poor people, and in temples also; we read^{f891} of one in the temple of Ceres, which drew its web over the face of the image: and though her webs are oftentimes destroyed, especially in kings' palaces; yet such is her constancy and assiduity, and her unwearied application to business, that, as fast as they are destroyed, she attempts to restore them. This creature is an emblem of diligence in things temporal and spiritual; which those that use in the former sense shall stand before kings, and not before mean men; and in the latter sense shall have the presence of the King of kings, and dwell in his palace here and hereafter: also of worldly minded men, who labour to be rich; spend their time, and take a great deal of pains for mere trifles; weave curious webs, and, after all, only catch flies; and those they cannot hold, uncertain riches, which make themselves wings and fly away. Likewise this creature may resemble hypocrites, whose hope and trust are as the spider's web, built upon their own righteousness, spun out of their own hearts; a fine, thin, slender thread, which cannot bear one stroke of the besom of divine justice; such as these are in the palaces of Christ the King, are in his churches, hypocrites in Zion; (see ^{<1003>}Job 8:13,14). Aben Ezra interprets it of the ape: the same David de Pomis^{f892} observes, and Mr. Weemse^{f893}, who seems to incline to this sense; and this creature King Solomon, no doubt, had in his palace, since his navy brought many of these, every three years, from those parts to which it was sent, (^{<1102>}1 Kings 10:22); and to these hands more properly belong than to spiders, and are taken into king's palaces for their pleasure and diversion; but to these there is one objection, that this creature is not a little one. Others understand it of the "lizard", that sort which is called "stellio"; but it is a question whether this is to be found in king's palaces. Bellonius^{f894} makes mention of a kind of lizard, which creeps into walls and catches flies, and is called by the Greeks "samiamiton", a name very near the Hebrew word here used: and Pliny^{f895} speaks of the "stellio", or lizard, as being in doors, windows, and chambers; and as a very fraudulent and deceitful creature to men, none more so; and also as poisonous, as this creature in the text by its name seems to be: and Austin^{f896} makes mention of the lizard as a domestic

animal; which catches flies as the spider, with whom he joins it. The Targum, Jarchi, and Gersom, take it to be the spider, as we do; which may be thought most likely, since the creature here meant seems to have its name from the Arabic word “sam”, which signifies poison^{f897}; though it is affirmed^{f898} the spider is not poisonous; as is well known by persons who have frequently swallowed them, without any more harm than happens to hens, robin red breasts, and other birds, who make them their daily food; and so men have been bit by them, without any ill consequence: wherefore it is still thought by some that the lizard is more probably meant; since some sorts of them are poisonous^{f899}, though not all, for some are eatable; (see Gill on “^{<B113>}Leviticus 11:30”).

Ver. 29. *There be three [things] which go well*, etc.] In a very orderly and composed manner; with constancy and cheerfulness, with great stateliness and majesty, intrepidly, and without fear;

yea, four are comely in going; very beautiful and lovely to look at as they walk.

Ver. 30. *A lion, [which is] strongest among beasts*, etc.] For what is stronger than a lion, or more courageous and undaunted? it walks with great majesty, very slowly, step by step, the left foot first; shaking its shoulders as it goes, as the philosopher^{f900} describes its going, and as here intended, and this without fear;

and turneth not away for any; it does not go out of its way for any creature it meets with; nor does it hasten its pace when pursued, nor show the lest sign of fear; nor does it turn its back to any; which is observed and confirmed by Aristotle^{f901}, Aelianus^{f902}, Pliny^{f903}, and other naturalists; particularly what Homer^{f904} and Virgil^{f905} say of this animal agrees with this account of Solomon. This creature is an emblem of Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who is stronger than the strong man armed; who never turned his back to any of his enemies; nor turned aside from the way of his duty, or the work of his office, on account of any; not Herod the fox, who threatened to kill him; nor Satan, the roaring lion, when he knew he was on the march to meet him; nor any of those, who, though they had a band of soldiers, that came to take him; (see ^{<B131>}Luke 13:31,32 ^{<B140>}John 14:30,31 18:4-8); and also it is an emblem of righteous men, who are as bold as a lion; and cannot be moved from their duty by anything they meet with, but remain steadfast and constant in it; (see ^{<B100>}Proverbs 28:1 ^{<B103>}Acts 20:23,24).

Ver. 31. *A greyhound*, etc.] So Gersom interprets the word; but Jarchi owns he does not know what is meant; and Aben Ezra only says, it is the name of a living creature, but does not say what; but observes, that some interpret it of the “bee”, and others of the “eagle”. The words of the original text only describe something “girt about the loins”^{f906}: and Kimchi^{f907} observes, that some say it is a hunting dog so called, because it is thin about the loins, as if it was bound and girt; and Aristotle^{f908} describes hunting dogs as well girded about their loins: but others, as Kimchi in the same place observes, interpret it of the leopard, which is small, and strong in its loins; and others of a bird called the starling; but he owns he cannot understand the meaning of its loins being girt: David de Pomis^{f909} interprets it of a cock; others, he says, interpret it a hunting dog; others, a leopard; and some, a species of an unclean bird; perhaps he means the starling, as before; and so the word is used for that bird in the Talmud^{f910}, and in the Arabic language^{f911}. Most likely the “horse” is meant; which is a very stately and majestic creature in its going, and is very comely when it has its harness girt on; and especially a war horse, with all its warlike accoutrements, when it proceeds to battle, and stalks on in it; this creature, one should think, could not be omitted among the four, which is described in so magnificent a manner in (~~39:19~~ Job 39:19-25); and is called the goodly horse in the battle, (~~30:3~~ Zechariah 10:3); unless a fine slender bodied race horse should be meant: the horse bids fairer than any other creature named to be what is designed. The third creature follows, which goes well, and is comely in going:

an he goat also; which with its long beard walks very gravely, and in a stately manner, before the flock; and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions add, “going before the flock”; (see ~~25:8~~ Jeremiah 50:8). This stately walk of the goat is very particularly taken notice of by, Aelian^{f912}; he observes, that the she goat disdains to be last in a flock of sheep, but declares by her walk that she ought to be first; he adds, that the he goat goes before the she goats, glorying in his beard; and, by a kind of wonderful instinct in nature, judges the male is to be preferred to the female^{f913}. Kings, rulers, and governors, are compared to this creature; as Alexander the great is in (~~27:8~~ Daniel 8:5,11); (see ~~30:3~~ Zechariah 10:3); especially such resemble it who rule well, and set good examples to their subjects: and to such, ministers of the Gospel are like; who go before their flocks, guide and direct them, and are examples to them: and likewise all

believers; who strive to go before others in good works, and who then are comely in their going. The fourth is,

and a king, against whom [there is] no rising up; no insurrection, no opposition; who is not to be resisted or withstood; a lawful king, in the lawful administration of government, who rules in the fear of God, and according to his word, and the good and wholesome laws of a nation, ought not to be resisted, (^{63B}Romans 13:1,2); and a powerful, successful, and victorious king cannot be resisted, withstood, and prevailed over; he drives all before him, and subdues all under him, as David, Cyrus, Alexander, and others. But to none can this better be applied than to Christ, the King of kings; against whom there is no rising, before whom none can stand, against whom the gates of hell can never prevail; who, even in his state of humiliation, conquered and subdued all his and our enemies; destroyed the tyrant, sin; spoiled Satan, and his principalities and powers; overcame the world; abolished death, the last enemy; and delivered his people out of the hands of all, and made them more than conquerors: and who went forth in the ministry of the Gospel, into the Gentile world, conquering and to conquer; bearing down all opposition before him, and subduing the people under him; and who, in the latter day, will engage with his antichristian enemies, the beast, false prophet, and kings of the earth, and shall overcome them, and clear the world of them. And this is King who is comely in his going; as he was in his goings of old from everlasting; when he drew nigh to his divine. Father, and became the surety of his people; and in his coming into this world, by the assumption of our nature, to save lost perishing sinners: and so he is in his spiritual visits to his saints; in his goings in the sanctuary, and walks he takes amidst the golden candlesticks, his churches; as he will be also when he comes a second time in the clouds of heaven: it will be a glorious appearing; he will come with all the saints, and be attended with his mighty angels; he will come in their glory, in his own, and in the glory of his Father; and will be comely in his going indeed it will be with great stateliness and majesty. The learned Dr. Pococke^{f914}, from the use of the word “alkum” in the Arabic language, renders the words thus, “and a king with whom the people is”; who agree together; the one rules well, and the other obey cheerfully; such a king walking with majesty is comely to his people, and terrible to his enemies. The Targum is,

“and a king, who stands and speaks in the house of his people.”

Ver. 32. *If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself*, etc.] Against a king, against whom there is no rising up; by speaking evil of him, or rebelling against him; which is acting a foolish part, since it brings a man into troubles and difficulties inextricable; or by self-commendation, which is the height of folly, and the fruit of pride; or carried it in such a haughty and overbearing manner to others, as to provoke to wrath and anger;

or if thou hast thought evil; purposed and designed it, and contrived the scheme of doing it, though not yet put in execution; though folly is not actually committed, yet since the thought of it is vain, care should be taken to prevent it;

[lay] thine hand upon thy mouth: think again before the thing resolved on is done; as studious and thoughtful men put their hand to their mouth, when they are deeply considering any affair before them: or put a stop to the design, let it go no further; what has been thought of in the mind, let it never come out of the mouth, nor be carried into execution; stifle it in the first motion: or if this respects a foolish action done, as it also may, since it stands connected with both clauses, then the sense is, be silent; do not pretend to deny the action, nor to excuse it; nor to say one word in the defence of it; nor to lay the blame upon others; and much less to calumniate and reproach such who faithfully reprove for it; take shame to thyself in silence, and repent of the iniquity done. Aben Ezra thinks these words are said to Ithiel and Ucal; but rather, to any and everyone, to all that should hear and read these proverbs. The Targum is,

“do not lift up thyself, lest thou be foolish; and do not stretch out thine hand to thy mouth.”

Ver. 33. *Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter*, etc.] Or the pressing of it. This is a thing well known and certain, that of milk, when pressed out of the udder, and put into a churn, and there is shook together, by a constant violent agitation or motion, called churning, butter is produced; and cheese is sometimes called pressed milk^{f915}, and is pressed with the runnet, and by the hand also^{f916};

and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: a too violent compression of it, or forcible blowing of it, in order to purge it from any impurity in it; instead of doing which it may break the tender skin, and bring forth blood, which may be of bad consequence;

so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife; irritating the passions of men, and provoking them by scurrilous and reproachful words to wrath and anger, produce contentions, feuds, and lawsuits, which are not soon and easily ended; and therefore such a conduct should be carefully avoided. The same word is used in the three clauses, and signifies pressing, squeezing, forcing.

CHAPTER 31

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 31

This chapter contains the last part of the book of Proverbs; which some reckon the fifth, others the sixth. It contains the instructions of the mother of a prince, whose name was Lemuel, which she gave unto him; and which are so valuable, as to be annexed to the proverbs of Solomon. The preface or introduction to them is in (~~2B10~~Proverbs 31:1); the address to her son, (~~2B10~~Proverbs 31:2). The vices she cautions him against are uncleanness and intemperance; which she dissuades from, because of the pernicious consequences of both to kings and to their subjects, (~~2B10~~Proverbs 31:3-5). Advises rather to give wine and strong drink to poor people, such as are in distress; as being more useful to them, at least less prejudicial, (~~2B10~~Proverbs 31:6,7); and exhorts her son to the duties of his office; by pleading the cause of the poor and injured, and administering justice to them, (~~2B10~~Proverbs 31:8,9). And then at large describes a virtuous woman; perhaps designed as an instruction to her son in the choice of a wife, (~~2B10~~Proverbs 31:10-31); though more than that may be intended by it.

Ver. 1. *The words of King Lemuel*, etc.] Not what were spoken by him, but what were spoken to him; or declaring what his mother said, as what follows shows; of this king we have no account elsewhere under this name. Grotius thinks that King Hezekiah, whose mother Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah, whom he supposes to be a wise man, from whom she had learned much, instructed her son in the following manner; but gives no other reason for this conjecture but that this chapter follows the collection of proverbs made by the men of Hezekiah; but they are expressly said to be Solomon's, and the words of Agur more immediately follow them; and besides Hezekiah does not appear ever to be addicted to the vices this prince was; much more probable is the conjecture of Bishop Patrick, that he was a prince of another country, perhaps in Chaldea, since a Chaldee word is three times used in his mother's address to him, and another word in a Chaldee termination; and he supposes his mother to be a Jewish lady, that taught her son the lessons herein contained. But the general sense of Jewish and Christian writers is, that Solomon himself is meant; whose

name Lemuel is either a corruption of his name Solomon, a fond pretty name his mother Bathsheba gave him when young, and he thought fit to write it just as his mother spoke it; as mothers often do give such broken names to their children in fond affection to them: or it was another name of his, as it appears he had more than one; it signifies “to God”, one that was devoted to him, as he was by his parents and by himself; or one that belonged to God, was his, as Solomon was; he was beloved of God, and therefore called Jedidiah, (~~1024~~ 2 Samuel 12:24,25); one to whom God was a father, and he a son to him; and he was chosen and appointed by him to succeed his father David in the kingdom, (~~1073~~ 2 Samuel 7:13 ~~1335~~ 1 Chronicles 28:5). Hillerus^{f917} makes the word to signify “over against God”, or “before the face of the first”, or of God and was a type of the “angel of faces”, or of God’s presence, (~~2379~~ Isaiah 63:9);

the prophecy that his mother taught him; either in his youth, or when he was come to the throne; to whom she had access, and with whom she used freedom; and particularly when she saw he was inclined unto, or going into, the vices she cautions him against. Her instruction is called a “prophecy”, because she delivered it on a foresight of the sins her son would be tempted with, and liable to fall into; and this foresight was either through her natural sagacity, or under a spirit of prophecy; or rather it is so called, because any wise saying, or doctrine of moment and importance, and especially if it was by divine inspiration, was so called; (see ~~1011~~ Proverbs 30:1); as Solomon tells us what his father David taught him, so here what his mother Bathsheba instructed him in; and it would have been well if he had taken the advice she gave him, and he gave to his son; (see ~~1043~~ Proverbs 4:3,4 1:8).

Ver. 2. *What, my son?* etc.] What shall I call thee? though thou art a king, can I address thee in more suitable language, or use a more endearing appellative than this, and what follows? permit me, thy mother, to speak unto thee as my son: and what shall I say to thee? I want words, I want wisdom; O that I knew what to say to thee, that would be proper and profitable; or what is it I am about to say to thee? things of the greatest moment and importance, and therefore listen to me; and so the manner of speaking is designed to excite attention: or what shall I ask of thee? no part of thy kingdom, or any share in the government of it; only this favour, to avoid the sins unbecoming a prince, and to do the duty of a king, later mentioned. The Targum and Syriac version represent her as exclaiming, reproving, and threatening; as, Alas my son! is this the life thou designest

to live, to give up thyself to wine and women? fie upon it, my son, is this becoming thy birth, education, and dignity? is this the fruit of all the pains I have taken in bringing thee up? consider the unbecoming part thou art acting;

and what, the son of my womb? whom I bore in sorrow, brought forth in pain, and took so much care and trouble to bring up in a religious way, and form for usefulness in church and state? not an adopted son, but my own flesh and blood; and therefore what I say must be thought to proceed from pure affection to thee, and solely for thy good; see (²³⁹¹⁵Isaiah 49:15);

and what, the son of my vows? whom I asked of God, and promised to give up to him again, and did; for which reason she might call him Lemuel, as Hannah called her son Samuel, for a like reason, (⁴⁰⁰²⁸1 Samuel 1:28); a son for whom she had put up many prayers, for his temporal and spiritual good; and on whose account she had made many vows, promises, and resolutions, that she would do so and so, should she be so happy as to bring him into the world, and bring him up to man's estate, and see him settled on the throne of Israel.

Ver. 3. *Give not thy strength unto women,* etc.] Strength of body, which is weakened by an excessive use of venery^{f918} with a multiplicity of women; see, (³¹⁸⁹Proverbs 5:9); and strength of mind, reason, and wisdom, which is impaired by conversation with such persons; whereby time is consumed and lost, which should be spent in the improvement of knowledge: or "thy riches", as the Septuagint and Arabic versions, thy substance, which harlots devour, and who bring a man to a piece of bread, as the prodigal was, (³¹⁶⁵Proverbs 6:26 ²¹⁵³⁰Luke 15:30); and even drain the coffers of kings and princes;

nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings; do not give thy mind to take such courses, and pursue such ways and methods, as bring ruin on kings and kingdoms, as conversation with harlots does; (see ³¹⁰²⁶Proverbs 7:26). Some think the design of this advice is to warn against any ambitious views of enlarging his dominions by invading neighbouring countries, and making war with neighbouring kings, to the ruin of them; but the former sense seems best. The Targum is,

"nor thy ways to the daughters of kings."

Solomon was given to women, who proved very pernicious to him, (^{<1100>}1 Kings 11:1-5). Some render it, “which destroyeth counsel”^{f919}; for whoredom weakens the mind as well as the body.

Ver. 4. [*It is*] *not for kings, O Lemuel*, etc.] It is not fit for them, it is very unbecoming them; it is dishonourable to them, to such as Lemuel was, or was likely to be; or far be it from kings, let no such thing be do ne by them, nor by thee;

[it is] not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink; it is lawful for kings to drink wine in a moderate manner, and for princes, counsellors, and judges, to drink strong drink; meaning not such as is made of malt, which in those times was not used; but of honey, dates, pomegranates, and such like things; but then it was very unbecoming for either of them to drink any of these to excess; it is very disgraceful to any man to drink immoderately, to make a beast of himself, and much more a king or judge, who, of all men, ought to be grave and sober; both that they may perform their office well, and maintain the grandeur and dignity of it, which otherwise would become useless and despicable, yea, pernicious, as follows. Solomon, notwithstanding this advice, gave himself unto wine as well as women, (^{<2008>}Ecclesiastes 2:3). The Targum is,

“take care of kings, O Lemuel, of kings who drink wine, and of princes that drink strong drink.”

So the Syriac version, keep no company with them, nor follow their example; (see ^{<2107>}Ecclesiastes 10:17 ^{<2075>}Hosea 7:5); The last clause may be rendered, “nor for princes [to say], where is strong drink”^{f920}? where is it to be had? where is the best? as drunkards do; which is according to the marginal reading; but the “Cetib”, or writing, is **wa**, “or”^{f921}; but some render it as a noun, “the desire of strong drink”^{f922}: it does not become princes to covet it.

Ver. 5. *Lest they drink, and forget the law*, etc.] The law of God by Moses, which the kings of Israel were obliged to write a copy of, and read over daily, to imprint it on their minds, that they might never forget it, but always govern according to it, (^{<0578>}Deuteronomy 17:18,19); or the law of their ancestors, or what was made by themselves, which through intemperance may be forgotten; for this sin stupefies the mind and hurts the memory, and makes men forgetful;

and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted; a king on the throne, or a judge on the bench, drunk, must be very unfit for his office; since he must be incapable of attending to the cause before him, of taking in the true state of the case; and, as he forgets the law, which is his rule of judgment, so he will mistake the point in debate, and put one thing for another; and “change”^{f923} and alter, as the word signifies, the judgment of the afflicted and injured person, and give the cause against him which should be for him; and therefore it is of great consequence that kings and judges should be sober. A certain woman, being undeservedly condemned by Philip king of Macedon, when drunk, said,

“I would appeal to Philip, but it shall be when he is sober;”

which aroused him; and, more diligently examining the cause, he gave, a more righteous sentence^{f924}.

Ver. 6. *Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish*, etc.] Thou, O Lemuel, and other kings and judges, rather than drink strong drink yourselves, least to excess; give it out of your great abundance and liberality to poor persons in starving circumstances, who must perish, unless relieved; it will do them good, moderately used; and should they drink too freely, which they ought not, yet it would not be attended with such bad consequences as if kings and princes should;

and wine to those that be of heavy heart; of melancholy dispositions, under gloomy apprehensions of things; pressed with the weight of their affliction and poverty: or, “bitter in soul”^{f925}; such as God has dealt bitterly with, as Naomi says was her case, and therefore called her own name Marah, which signifies bitter; of such a sorrowful spirit, and one thus bitter in soul, was Hannah; and so Job, and others; persons in great affliction and distress, to whom life itself is bitter; see (KJB) Ruth 1:20 (KJB) 1 Samuel 1:10 (KJB) Job 3:20 10:1; now wine to such is very exhilarating and cheering; (see (KJB) Judges 9:13 (KJB) Psalm 104:15).

Ver. 7. *Let him drink, and forget his poverty*, etc.] Which has been very pressing upon him, and afflicting to him; let him drink till he is cheerful, and forgets that he is a poor man; however, so far forgets as not to be troubled about it, and have any anxious thoughts how he must have food and raiment^{f926};

and remember his misery no more; the anguish of his mind because of his straitened circumstances; or “his labour”^{f927}, as it may be rendered; so the

Septuagint and Arabic versions, the labour of his body, the pains he takes to get a little food for himself and family. The Targum is,

“and remember his torn garments no more;”

his rags, a part of his poverty. Such virtue wine may have for the present to dispel care, than which it is said nothing can be better^{f928}; and to induce a forgetfulness of misery, poverty, and of other troubles. So the mixed wine Helena gave to Telemachus, called Nepenthe, which when drunk, had such an effect as to remove sorrow, and to bring on forgetfulness of past evils^{f929}; and of which Diodorus Siculus^{f930} and Pliny^{f931} speak as of such use. The ancients used to call Bacchus, the god of wine, the son of forgetfulness; but Plutarch^{f932} thought he should rather be called the father of it. Some, by those that are “ready to perish”, understand condemned malefactors, just going to die; and think the Jewish practice of giving wine mingled with myrrh or frankincense, or a stupefying potion to such that they might not be sensible of their misery^{f933}, such as the Jews are supposed to offer to Christ, (⁴¹¹⁵²³Mark 15:23); is grounded upon this passage; but the sense given is best: the whole may be applied in a spiritual manner to such persons who see themselves in a “perishing”, state and condition; whose consciences are loaded with guilt, whose souls are filled with a sense of wrath, have a sight of sin, but not of a Saviour; behold a broken, cursing, damning law, the flaming sword of justice turning every way, but no righteousness to answer for them, no peace, no pardon, no stoning sacrifice but look upon themselves lost and undone: and so of “heavy hearts”; have a spirit of heaviness in them, a heaviness upon their spirits: a load of guilt on them too heavy to bear, so that they cannot look up: or are “bitter in soul”; sin is made bitter to them, and they weep bitterly for it: now to such persons “wine”, in a spiritual sense, should be given; the Gospel, which is as the best wine, that, goes down sweetly, should be preached unto them; they should be told of the love of God and Christ to poor sinners, which is better than wine; and the blessings of grace should be set before them, as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, by Christ, the milk and wine to be had without money and without price; of these they should drink, or participate of, by faith, freely, largely, and to full satisfaction; by means of which they will “forget” their spiritual “poverty”, and consider themselves as possessed of the riches of grace, as rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom; and so remember no more their miserable estate by nature, and the anguish of their souls in the view of

that; unless it be to magnify and adore the riches of God's grace in their deliverance.

Ver. 8. *Open thy mouth for the dumb*, etc.] Not who are naturally so, but who cannot speak in their own behalf, either through want of elocution, or knowledge of the laws; or who are bashful, timorous, and fearful, being overawed by the majesty of a court of judicature, or by their prosecutors; or who, as they have not a tongue, so not a purse, to speak for them, the fatherless and the widow; which latter has her name, in the Hebrew language, from dumbness. Here Lemuel's mother advises him to open his mouth freely, readily, boldly, and intrepidly, and plead for such persons. Even

in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction; whose destruction is resolved on by their accusers and prosecutors; and who are in danger of it, being charged with capital crimes; unless some persons of wisdom, power, and authority, interpose on their behalf. It may be rendered, "in the cause of all the children of change", or "passing away"^{f934}; the children of the world, which passeth away with all things in it, as Kimchi; or orphans, whose help passeth away, as Jarchi; or rather strangers, as others, who pass from place to place and whose state and condition is liable to many changes who may be ignorant of the laws of the country where they are, and may stand in need of persons to plead for them.

Ver. 9. *Open thy mouth, judge righteously*, etc.] Having heard the cause, pronounce a righteous sentence; deliver it freely and impartially, with all readiness and boldness, not caring for the censures of wicked and unjust men;

and plead the cause of the poor and needy; who are oppressed by the rich, cannot plead for themselves, nor fee others to plead for them; do thou do it freely and faithfully. Thus as Lemuel's mother cautions him against women and wine, she advises him to do the duties of his office in administering impartial justice to all, and particularly in being the advocate and judge of the indigent and distressed.

Ver. 10. *Who can find a virtuous woman*, etc.] This part of the chapter is disjoined from the rest in the Septuagint and Arabic versions; and Huetius^{f935} thinks it is a composition of some other person, and not Lemuel's mother, whose words he supposes end at (^{אפוק} Proverbs 31:9); but it is generally thought that what follows to the end of the chapter is a

continuance of her words, in which she describes a person as a fit wife for her son. Some think that Bathsheba gave the materials, the sum and substance of this beautiful description, to Solomon; who put it in the artificial form it is, each verse beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in order till the whole is gone through; though rather it seems to be a composition of Solomon's, describing the character and virtues of his mother Bathsheba. But, be this as it will, the description is drawn up to such a pitch, and wrote in such strong lines, as cannot agree with any of the daughters of fallen Adam, literally understood; not with Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon; nor with the Virgin Mary, as the Papists, who, they fancy, was immaculate and sinless, of which there is no proof; nor indeed with any other; for though some parts of the description may meet in some, and others in others, yet not all in one; wherefore the mystical and spiritual sense of the whole must be sought after. Some by the "virtuous woman" understand the sensitive soul, subject to the understanding and reason, as Gersom; others the Scriptures, as Lyra, which lead to virtue, contain much riches in them, far above rubies; in which men may safely confide as the rule of their faith and practice; and will do them good, and not evil, continually. Others, "Wisdom", who in the beginning of this book is represented as a woman making provision for her household, and said to be more precious than rubies; and is to be understood of Christ; which I should have readily given into, but that this virtuous woman is said to have a husband, (²¹⁸¹¹Proverbs 31:11,23,28); which cannot agree with Christ, who is himself the husband of his church and people, which church of his, I think, is here meant; nor is this a novel sense of the passage, but what is given by many of the ancient Christian writers, as Ambrose, Bede, and others; and whoever compares (²¹⁸²⁸Proverbs 31:28,29), with (²⁵⁴⁵Song of Solomon 6:8,9), will easily see the agreement; and will be led to observe that Solomon wrote both, and had a view to one and the same person, the church of Christ, who is often represented by a "woman", (²⁵⁴⁵Isaiah 54:5:5,6 ⁸¹²⁵Galatians 3:26 ⁶¹¹Revelation 12:1); a woman grown and marriageable, as the Gospel church may be truly said to be, in comparison of the Jewish church, which was the church in infancy; a woman actually married to Christ; a woman fruitful, bringing forth many children to him; a woman beautiful, especially in his eyes, with whom she is the fairest among women; a woman, the weaker vessel, unable to do anything without him, yet everything through him: a "virtuous" one, inviolably chaste in her love and affection to Christ, her husband; steadfast in her adherence, to him by faith, as her Lord and Saviour; incorrupt in doctrine, sincere and spiritual in

worship, retaining the purity of discipline, and holiness of life; and holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience: or a “woman of strength”^{f936}, valour, and courage, as the word signifies, when used of men, (~~1918~~ 1 Samuel 16:18 ~~1916~~ Psalm 76:6); The church is militant, has many enemies, and these powerful and mighty, as well as cunning and crafty; yet, with all their power and policy, cannot overcome her; the gates of hell cannot prevail against her; she engages with them all, and is more than a conqueror over them; she is of great spiritual strength, which she, has from Christ, to fight the Lord’s battles, to withstand every enemy, to exercise grace, and do every good work; and all her true members persevere to the end: or a “woman of riches”^{f937}; that gets wealth and, riches by her wisdom and prudence, so Aben Ezra; a woman of fortune, as is commonly said: such is the church of Christ, through his unsearchable riches communicated to her; riches of grace she now possesses, and riches of glory she is entitled to. But “who can find” such an one? there is but one to be found^{f938}; though there are many particular churches, there is but one church of the firstborn, consisting of God’s elect, of which Christ is the head and husband, (~~2119~~ Song of Solomon 6:9); and there is but one that could find her: even her surety, Saviour, and Redeemer; compare with this (~~1118~~ Revelation 5:3-5). This supposes her lost, as she was in Adam; Christ’s seeking of her, as he did in redemption, and does in effectual calling; and who perfectly knows her, and all her members, and where they are; and whom he finds out, and bestows on them the blessings of grace and goodness;

for her price [is] far above rubies; showing the value Christ her husband puts upon her, the esteem she is had in by him; who reckons her as his portion and inheritance; as preferable to the purest gold, and choicest silver; as his peculiar treasure; as his jewels, and more valuable than the most precious stones: this appears by his undertaking for her; by doing and suffering what he has on her account; the price he has paid for her is far above rubies; she is bought with a price, but not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ; the ransom price paid for her is himself, who is more precious than rubies, and all the things that can be desired, (~~1118~~ 1 Peter 1:18,19 ~~5116~~ 1 Timothy 2:6 ~~2118~~ Proverbs 3:15).

Ver. 11. *The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her*, etc.] Christ her Maker is her husband, who has asked her in marriage, and has betrothed her to himself in righteousness; and of whose chaste love, and inviolable

attachment to him, he is fully satisfied, as well as of her fidelity in keeping what he commits unto her; he trusts her with his Gospel and ordinances, which she faithfully retains and observes; and with his children born in her, who are nursed up at her side, to whom she gives the breasts of ordinances, bears them on her sides, and dandles them on her knees, as a tender and careful mother does, (^{<2810>}Isaiah 60:4 66:11,12);

so that he shall have no need of spoil; he shall never want any; by means of the word preached in her, prey and spoil shall be taken out of the hands of the mighty, and he shall divide the spoil with them; or have souls snatched out of the hands of Satan, and translated into his kingdom, (^{<2832>}Isaiah 53:12). The Septuagint version understands it of the virtuous woman, and not of her husband; “such an one as she shall not want good spoils”; now, prey or spoil sometimes signifies food, as in (^{<3305>}Psalm 111:5); and so Jarchi interprets it here; and then the sense is, she shall not want spiritual provisions; she shall have plenty of them from her husband, who reposes such confidence in her; or shall not want excellent treasures, as the Arabic version, which also understands it of her; such are the word and ordinances, and particularly precious promises, which are more rejoicing than a great spoil, (^{<3302>}Psalm 119:162); and so Ambrose interprets¹⁹³⁹ it of the church, who needs no spoils because she abounds with them, even with the spoils of the world, and of the devil.

Ver. 12. *She will do him good, and not evil*, etc.] Or, repay good unto him, give him thanks for all the good things bestowed by him on her; will seek his interest, and promote his honour and glory to the uttermost; all the good works she does, which she is qualified for, and ready to perform, are all done in his name and strength, and with a view to his glory; nor will she do any evil willingly and knowingly against him, against his truths and ordinances; or that is detrimental to his honour, and prejudicial to his interest, (^{<4738>}2 Corinthians 13:8);

all the days of her life; through which she desires to serve him in righteousness and true holiness; and to be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in his work, (^{<4174>}Luke 1:74,75).

Ver. 13. *She seeketh wool and flax*, etc.] To get them, in order to spin them, and work them up into garments; she stays not till they are brought to her, and she is pressed to take them; but she seeks after them, which shows her willingness to work, as is after more fully expressed. It was usual in ancient times for great personages to do such works as these, both

among the Grecians^{f940} and Romans: Lucretia with her maids were found spinning, when her husband Collatinus paid a visit to her from the camp^{f941}: Tanaquills, or Caia Caecilia, the wife of King Tarquin, was an excellent spinster of wool^{f942}; her wool, with a distaff and spindle, long remained in the temple of Sangus, or Sancus, as Varro^{f943} relates: and a garment made by her, wore by Servius Tullius, was reserved in the temple of Fortune; hence it became a custom for maidens to accompany newly married women with a distaff and spindle, with wool upon them^{f944}, signifying what they were principally to attend unto; and maidens are advised to follow the example of Minerva, said to be the first that made a web^{f945}; and, if they would have her favour, to learn to use the distaff, and to card and spin^{f946}: so did the daughters of Minyas, in Ovid^{f947}; and the nymphs, in Virgil^{f948}. When Alexander the great advised the mother of Darius to use her nieces to such employments, the Persian ladies were in great concern, it being reckoned reproachful with them for such to move their hands to wool; on hearing which, Alexander himself went to her, and told her the clothes he wore were wrought by his sisters^{f949}: and the daughters and granddaughters of Augustus Caesar employed themselves in the woollen manufacture by his order^{f950}; and he himself usually wore no other garment than what was made at home, by his wife, sister, daughter, and granddaughter^{f951}. The Jews have a saying^{f952}, that there is no wisdom in a woman but in the distaff; suggesting, that it is her wisdom to mind her spinning, and the affairs of her household: at the Roman marriages, the word “thalassio” was often repeated^{f953}, which signified a vessel in which spinning work was put; and this was done to put the bride in mind what her work was to be. Now as to the mystical sense of these words; as of wool outward garments, and of flax linen and inward garments, are made; by the one may be meant external, and by the other internal, acts of religion; both are to be done, and not the one without the other: outward acts of religion are, such as hearing the word, attendance on ordinances, and all good works, which make up a conversation garment that should be kept; and they should be done so as to be seen of men, but not for that reason: and internal acts of religion are, the fear of God, humility, faith, hope, love, and other graces, and the exercises of them, which make up the new man, to be put on as a garment; and these should go together; bodily exercise, without powerful godliness, profiteth little; and pretensions to spirituality and internal religion, without regard to the outward duties of religion, are all vain. Hence Ambrose, on the text, observes that one may say,

“It is enough to worship and serve God in my mind; what need have I to go to church, and visibly mingle with Christians? Such a man would have a linen, without a woollen garment, this woman knew not; she does not commend such works.”

She sought all opportunities of doing good works externally, as believers do; and sought after the kingdom of God, inward godliness, which lies in peace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Not that such garments are to be joined with Christ's robe of righteousness, to make up a justifying one; a garment mingled with linen and woollen, in this sense, is not to come upon the saints, (~~CRUE~~ Leviticus 19:19);

and worketh willingly with her hands; or, “with the pleasure of her hands”¹⁹⁵⁴; as if her hands took delight in working, as the church and all true believers do; who are made willing in the day of the Lord's power upon them, to serve him, as well as to be saved by him; in whose hearts he works, both to will and to do; and these do what they do cheerfully: these do the work of the Lord, not by the force of the law, nor through fear of punishment, but in love; not by constraint, but willingly, having no other constraint but the love of God and Christ; and not with mercenary selfish views, but with a view to his glory; and they find a pleasure and delight in all they do; Christ's ways are ways of pleasantness; his commandments are not grievous, his yoke is easy.

Ver. 14. *She is like the merchant ships*, etc.] Not like a single one, but like a navy of them, that cross the seas, go to foreign parts, and come back laden with rich goods: so the church of Christ, and her true members, like ships of burden, trade to heaven, by prayer and other religious exercises, and return with the riches of grace and mercy, to help them in time of need; and though they have often difficult and dangerous passages, are tossed with tempests, and covered with billows; yet, Christ being their pilot, faith their sail, and hope their anchor, they weather the seas, ride out all storms, and come safe home with their merchandise;

she bringeth her food from afar: from a far country, from Egypt particularly, from whence corn for bread, as the word here used signifies, was fetched and carried in ships to divers parts of the world¹⁹⁵⁵; to which the allusion may be: in a spiritual sense, it may mean that the church brings her food or bread from heaven, the good land afar off; where God her father, Christ her husband, and her friends the angels are; with whom she carries on a correspondence, and from hence she has her food for her

family; not from below, on earth; not dust, the serpent's food; nor ashes, on which a deceitful heart feeds; nor husks, which swine eat; but the corn of heaven, angels' food, the hidden and heavenly manna; the bread of life, which comes down from heaven; the Gospel of the grace of God, the good news from a far country.

Ver. 15. *She riseth also while it is yet night*, etc.] That is, before the ascent of the morning, as Aben Ezra explains it, before break of day; a great while before day, as Christ is said to rise to pray, (^{<4005>}Mark 1:35); while it was yet dark; so the church here: which shows her affection for her family, her care of her children, and fervent zeal for her husband's interest and good; a different frame of spirit this from that of hers in (^{<218D>}Song of Solomon 5:2,3);

and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens; in allusion to a daily stated allowance^{f956} of food given to such; and spiritually may be meant, by her "household" or family, the same with the family of Christ, that is named of himself, which consists of various persons, fathers, young men, and children; and by her "maidens" the ministers of the word; (see ^{<109B>}Proverbs 9:3); who are stewards in the family, and have the food for it put into their hands to dispense; it is by these the church gives meat to her household feeds them with knowledge and understanding, with the wholesome words of Christ, with the good doctrines of the Gospel; these have a certain portion given them, and they rightly cut and divide the word of truth, and give to everyone their portion of meat in due season, according to their age and circumstances; milk indeed to babes and meat to strong men; see (^{<012D>}Luke 12:42). The Targum renders the word for "portion [by] service": understanding not a portion of food, but of work, a task set them, and so the word is used in (^{<0154>}Exodus 5:14). The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, "works", which may be very well applied to the work and service of the Gospel ministry, and the several parts of it.

Ver. 16. *She considereth a field, and buyeth it*, etc.] The field are the Scriptures, in which are hid the rich treasures of Gospel doctrines and promises; and the church, and all truly enlightened persons, consider to what use this field may be put, to what account it will turn; how profitable the Scriptures are, for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness; what a rich mine and valuable treasure is in them; things more desirable, and of greater worth, than thousands of gold and silver;

and therefore will buy this field at any rate, and not sell it; will part with all they have before they will part with that; even life itself, which in an improper sense is called buying of it, though it is without money and without price; (see ^{<4134>}Matthew 13:44);

with the fruit of her hand she planteth a vineyard; her own vineyard, whose plants are an orchard of pomegranates, (^{<2706>}Song of Solomon 1:6 4:13); who through the ministry of the word, are planted in the house of the Lord, and flourish there; this the church is said to do by her ministers, who plant and water, as Paul and Apollos did, (^{<4106>}1 Corinthians 3:6,7). And it is observable, that in the Hebrew text there is a double reading; the “Keri”, or marginal reading, is feminine; but the “Cetib”, or writing, is masculine; to show that she did it by means of men, she made use of in her vineyard for that service; it being, as Aben Ezra observes, not the custom and business of women to plant vineyards, but men. It may be rendered, “he planted”, and be applied to her husband, Christ; who, through the ministry of the word in his church, plants souls in it; and happy are they who are the planting of the Lord! trees of righteousness, that he may be glorified, (^{<2608>}Isaiah 61:3).

Ver. 17. *She girdeth her loins with strength*, etc.] Showing her readiness to every good work; and with what cheerfulness, spirit, and resolution, she set about it, and with what dispatch and expedition she performed it: the allusion is to the girding and tucking up of long garments, wore in the eastern countries, when any work was set about in earnest, which required dispatch; (see ^{<4278>}Luke 17:8 12:35); the strength of creatures being in their loins, (^{<3806>}Job 40:16); the loins are sometimes put for strength, as in Plautus¹⁹⁵⁷; and the sense is much the same with what follows;

and strengtheneth her arms; does all she finds to do with all her might and main, as the church does; not in her own strength, but in the strength of Christ; to whom she seeks for it, and in whose strength she goes forth about her business; by whom the arms of her hands are made strong, even by the mighty God of Jacob; and because she thus applies to him for it, she is said to do it herself, (^{<0424>}Genesis 49:24 ^{<5043>}Philippians 4:13); here she plays the man, and acts the manly part, (^{<4663>}1 Corinthians 16:13).

Ver. 18. *She perceiveth that her merchandise [is] good*, etc.] That it turns to good account; that her trading to heaven is of great advantage; that she grows rich hereby; that her merchandise with Wisdom, or Christ, is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereby than fine gold; and

though her voyages are attended with trouble and danger, yet are profitable, and therefore she is not discouraged, but determined to pursue them; she is like the merchant man, seeking goodly pearls, who finds a pearl of great price, worth all his trouble; (see Gill on “^{<A114>}Proverbs 31:14”) and see (^{<A114>}Proverbs 3:14 ^{<A135>}Matthew 13:45,46);

her candle goeth not out by night; or “lamp”,^{f958}; her lamp of profession, which is always kept burning, (^{<A28>}Luke 12:35); or the glorious light of the Gospel, which always continues in the darkest times the church ever has been in; or her spiritual prosperity, which, though it may be damped, will never be extinct; when the candle of the wicked is often put out, (^{<A117>}Job 21:17); It may denote her diligence in working; who, as she rises early in the morning, (^{<A15>}Proverbs 31:15), so sits up late at night, and is never weary of well doing, night and day. Ambrose interprets it of the lamp of hope, which burns in the night, and by and for which men work, (^{<A34>}Romans 8:24 ^{<A10>}1 Corinthians 9:10).

Ver. 19. *She layeth her hands to the spindle*, etc.] As Penelope and her maidens did^{f959}. Or spinning wheel, more properly, the wheel itself, which is laid hold on by the right hand, and turned round;

and her hands hold the distaff; the rock, stick, or staff, about which the wool is wrapped, which is spun, and is held in the left hand; for though hands are mentioned in both clauses, yet it is only with one hand the wheel is turned, and the distaff held with the other. Not only wool and flax were sought by her, (^{<A13>}Proverbs 31:13); but she spins them, and works them up into garments her web is not like the spider’s, spun out of its own bowels, on which it hangs; to which the hope and trust of a hypocrite are compared, and whose webs do not become garments to cover them, (^{<A34>}Job 8:14 ^{<A13>}Isaiah 59:5,6); but the church’s web is both for ornament, to the adorning of her profession, and for defence and protection from the calumnies of the world; for by these are meant good works, as Ambrose interprets them.

Ver. 20. *She stretcheth out her hand to the poor*, etc.] Her liberality is very extensive, reaches to many, and at a distance; it is done with great cheerfulness and readiness; to do good and communicate, she forgets not, it being acceptable to her Lord and husband, (^{<A16>}Hebrews 13:16);

yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy; she gives with both hands, liberally and largely. It may be applied to the church, giving spiritual food

by her ministers to those who are poor in spirit, spiritually poor and needy, and who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Ver. 21. *She is not afraid of the snow for her household*, etc.] That her family should suffer through the rigour of a cold season, when it is frost and snow;

for all her household [are] clothed with scarlet: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “with double”,^{f960} that is, with double garments; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, joining the words to a following verse; and this, by some, is thought to be the better rendering of the words; since the scarlet colour is no fence against cold, no more than any other, whereas double garments are; and which may be applied to the garment of justification, or the robe of Christ’s righteousness, as one; and to the garment of sanctification, internal and external, as the other; the one, even the righteousness of Christ, or Christ the Lord our righteousness, is an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the storm; a sufficient shelter from the cold of snow, and all inclemencies of the weather; by which the vindictive wrath and justice of God may be signified: and the other is a screen from the malicious insinuations and reproaches of men. But had the word been designed to signify “double”, it would have been in the “dual” number; as it is not, and is always used in this form for “scarlet”; and so the Targum, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra interpret it; which colour is an emblem of the blood of Christ, by which the church is justified, (~~ⲀⲚⲚ~~ Romans 5:9); and all the household of faith, the whole family of Christ and household of God, are all justified by the same righteousness of Christ, consisting of his active and passive obedience, for the whole of which his crimson blood is put; it is a garment down to the feet, which covers all his people; they are all made righteous by the one obedience of Christ; they are all clothed in scarlet alike, all kings and priests unto God, all alike justified, and shall be glorified alike. The literal sense is, that if her household are clothed in scarlet in common; much more may it be thought that coarse and suitable garments would be provided for them, to protect them from the cold in winter^{f961}.

Ver. 22. *She maketh herself coverings of tapestry*, etc.] For the furniture and ornament of her house, or for her bed; which may signify the ordinances of the Gospel, and the decent, orderly, and beautiful administration of them, wherein the church has communion with her Lord; (see ²⁰¹⁶ Song of Solomon 1:16). The Vulgate Latin version renders it,

“garments of divers colours”, such as was Joseph’s coat, (¹³⁷⁸Genesis 37:3); and, in a spiritual sense, may be applied to the above mentioned garments, and agrees with what goes before and follows;

her clothing [is] silk and purple; the Tyrian purple, which, Strabo says¹⁹⁶², is the best; or purple silk, silk of a purple colour: or rather fine linen of this colour; a dress suitable to a queen, as the church is, who is represented as clothed with clothing of wrought gold, with raiment of needlework, (¹⁹⁸¹Psalms 45:9,13,14); (see ²⁶¹⁰Ezekiel 16:10,13). This is not her own natural clothing, for she has none by nature that deserves the name; nor of her own working, nor works of righteousness done by her; nor of her own putting on, but what Christ has wrought out for her, and clothes her with; and which is very rich in itself, the best robe, very ornamental to her; her wedding garment, and which will last for ever; (see ²³¹⁰Isaiah 61:10).

Ver. 23. *Her husband is known in the gates*, etc.] Of the city, where courts of justice were kept, and causes heard and tried by the judges, the elders of the land, later mentioned; among whom the husband of the virtuous woman was, where he was known, taken notice of, and celebrated; not so much for the beautiful garments she made him, as Jarchi; but rather for his wisdom, as Gersom, and for being the husband of such a woman; who, taking such care of his domestic affairs, he was more at leisure to attend public business, and transact it with reputation. Christ is the husband of the church in general, and of particular churches, and of every private believer; he fell in love with them, asked them of his Father, and betrothed them to himself; and is a kind, tender, loving, and sympathizing husband to his church and people; that nourishes and cherishes them, and provides all things for them, and interests them in all he has: and he is “known” by them, in the dignity of his person, in the excellency of his offices, and the fulness of his grace; he is known by them in the relation of an husband; he is well known in the church of God, in the assembly of his saints, (¹⁹⁸¹Psalms 76:1); he is known in the gates of Zion, in the public ministering of the word and ordinances; his name is celebrated, it becomes great and famous, wherever his Gospel is preached in the world; he is,

“known in the provinces,”

as the Targum; or,

“among the cities,”

as the Syriac version; among the nations of the world, in the cities of the Gentiles; as he will be, even from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, (^{<3011>}Malachi 1:11);

when he sitteth among the elders of the land; when he sits in his house, at his table, circled by his saints, his ancient ones; or as King, head, and husband of his people, on his throne in the church, encompassed with, the four and twenty elders, the representatives of Gospel churches, (^{<604E>}Revelation 4:2-4). And especially when he shall take to himself his great power, and reign gloriously before his ancients, the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and all his saints, which will come with him; whom he has loved with an everlasting love; who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and had grace given them, in him, before the world began, (^{<2323>}Isaiah 24:23); and when he shall come to judge the world, and will appear in great glory, and be seen and known of all; and shall sit on his throne of glory, and his elders also, sitting on twelve thrones, judging the tribes of Israel, (^{<4028>}Matthew 19:28); so Ambrose interprets it of the universal judgment.

Ver. 24. *She maketh fine linen, and selleth [it]*, etc.] She not only seeks wool and flax, and spins it, but makes it up into fine linen, which she disposes of to advantage to herself and family. Kimchi says^{f963}, the word signifies coverings for the night, as well as day he seems to design linen sheets: the Arabic version adds, and “sells it to the inhabitants of Bosra.” This, in the mystic sense, may signify either the good works the church does, and which she proposes as a pattern and example to her members; or divine instruction, as others, the preaching of the Gospel, and the truths of it; which she sells, and others buy, though both without money and without price; for, as she freely receives, she freely gives: or the righteousness of Christ, which is called fine linen and white raiment; which, properly speaking, is made by Christ, and sold by him, or bought of him, as before, without money; (see ^{<6018>}Revelation 19:8 3:18); yet this the church makes her own, by laying hold upon it by faith, and which she holds forth freely to others in the Gospel; which is therefore called “the ministration of righteousness”, (^{<4019>}2 Corinthians 3:9);

and delivereth girdles unto the merchant; to dispose of them for her; either to sell to others, to the Egyptian priests which wore them; or for their own use, to put their money in, girdles being used for that purpose, (see Gill on ^{<4010>}Matthew 10:9”). Or, “a girdle to the Canaanite”,^{f964}; the Canaanites or

Phoenicians being generally merchants, the word is put for one. By these may be meant ministers of the word; for, as the priests of Rome are called the merchants of the earth and false teachers are said to make merchandise men, (~~468B~~ Revelation 18:3 ~~468B-2~~ Peter 2:3); so faithful ministers, who trade for the good of souls, and seek not theirs, but them, and not their own things, but Christ's, may be called merchants: and to these "the girdle of truth" is given; and these the church exhorts to gird their loins with it, as well as all her members, that they may be ready to every good work, and particularly prepared to preach the Gospel of peace, (~~468A~~ Ephesians 6:14,15).

Ver. 25. *Strength and honour [are] her clothing*, etc.] Strength, not of body, but of mind. The church is clothed with strength, as her Lord, head, and husband, is said to be, (~~498B~~ Psalm 93:1); and which she has from him; for though she is the weaker vessel, and weak in herself, yet is strong in him; and is able to bear and do all things, with a fortitude of mind to withstand every enemy, and persevere in well doing: and she is clothed with "honour"; with honourable garments, suitable to her rank and dignity; in cloth of gold, in raiment of needlework; with the garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness;

and she shall rejoice in time to come; Aben Ezra interprets it of old age, or of the world to come; and Jarchi and Gersom of the day of death: having fulness of food and clothing, she is not afraid of want in old age, or in any time of distress that may come; and having a good name, laughs at death, and departs in peace; so these interpreters. The church of Christ fears no want at any time, nor need any of her members; they have a clothing that never waxes old, a righteousness that will answer for them in a time to come; their bread is given, and their waters are sure; they shall want no good thing; all their need is supplied from Christ; they have hope in their death, and rejoice then and sing, "O death, where is thy sting?" (~~465B-1~~ Corinthians 15:55); they will have confidence in the day of judgment, and not be ashamed; shall come to Zion with everlasting joy; and shall rejoice with Christ, angels and saints, to all eternity.

Ver. 26. *She openeth her mouth with wisdom*, etc.] When she opens her mouth, for it is not always open, she expresses herself in a discreet and prudent manner; as well as speaks of things not foolish and trifling, but of moment and importance, and of usefulness to others: or "concerning wisdom"¹⁹⁶⁵; the church and people of Christ talk of the wisdom of God in

the works of creation, providence, and redemption; of Christ, the Wisdom of God, and as made so to them; of the Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom; and of wisdom in the hidden part, or the truth of grace in their souls; of their gracious experiences; nor will they suffer any foolish, filthy, and corrupt communication to proceed out of their mouths, but speak the pure language of Canaan; what is for the use of edifying, and being taken out of the Scriptures is profitable for instruction in righteousness; (see ^{<357A>}Psalm 37:30);

and in her tongue [is] the law of kindness; or “the law of love”^{f966}, grace and mercy; which is the law of Christ, (^{<80D>}Galatians 6:2); speaking kindly and tenderly to everyone, exhorting to acts of mercy and kindness, and doing them herself: or “the doctrine of grace [is] in her tongue”^{f967}; the Gospel, which is called the Gospel of the grace of God, and the grace of God itself; it is the doctrine of the grace and love of God the Father towards men in Christ, as it appears in their election in him and redemption by him; of the grace of Christ in his incarnation, sufferings, and death; and of the grace of the Spirit in regeneration, conversion, and sanctification; and which contains various doctrines of grace, as of justification, pardon of sin, and effectual calling; and of salvation itself, which is all of grace: and this doctrine of grace, in the several branches of it, the church, and all gracious souls, cannot forbear speaking of; it is often in their mouths, it dwells upon their tongues; and careful are they in other respects that their speech be seasoned with grace, and be such that ministers grace to the hearers, (^{<40E>}Ephesians 4:29 ^{<51R6>}Colossians 3:6).

Ver. 27. *She looketh well to the ways of her household*, etc.] The business of her house, her domestic affairs; that her children and servants have convenient food, and in due season; that they have proper clothing, and keep their garments close about them, and unspotted; that everyone does the business of his calling, her several officers, and private members; that a good decorum is kept, that all things are done decently and in order; that the rules of her lord and husband are observed; that the conversations of all in her house are according to the word of God, and becoming their character: she takes care of the sick and weak, comforts the feeble minded, and supports the infirm; she cannot bear them that are evil, whether in principle or practice; that are immoral in their lives, or unsound in their faith; but admonishes them according to the nature of their offences, and casts out the obstinate or incorrigible. The words may be rendered, “she looks well to the ways of her house”^{f968}; that lead unto it, so Gersom;

either her house below, the way or entrance into which is by faith in Christ, and a profession of it; and she takes care that none be admitted but such who have it: or the ways in it, the commands, ordinances, appointments, and constitutions of Christ, called the ways of Zion; and concerned she is that all in her family walk in them, and observe them: or her house above, which is eternal in the heavens; Christ's Father's house and, hers, in which are many mansions, and everlasting habitations; the way to this also is Christ, who is the true way to eternal life, the strait gate and narrow way that leads to it; without his imputed righteousness, and the regenerating grace of his Spirit, there is no entrance into it: besides this, there are lesser paths which agree and coincide; as the paths of faith, truth, and holiness, and the ways of Christ's commandments, which issue in it, and which the church and her true members are careful to look unto and observe. The Arabic version renders it, "the paths of her house are strait"; with which compare (^{<4073>}Matthew 7:13,14). Jarchi interprets these ways of the law, which teaches the good way, and to separate from transgression;

and eateth not the bread of idleness; of an idle woman, as Aben Ezra; or she being idle does not eat bread; she does not eat it without labour; it is "the bread of labour", of many labours she eats, as in (^{<800>}Psalm 127:2); she labours for the meat which endures to everlasting life, (^{<8167>}John 6:27); the Gospel, that bread which strengthens man's heart, refreshes his spirit, is made of the finest of the wheat, contains the wholesome words of Christ, and by which men are nourished up unto everlasting life; and which particularly directs to Christ the true bread, the bread of life, of which if a man eat he shall never die, but live for ever; and on which true believers feed by faith; but though this is prepared for them, and is the gift of God to them, yet must be laboured for; it is not eaten without labour: believers read, hear, and pray, and diligently attend all ordinances for the sake of this food.

Ver. 28. *Her children arise up*, etc.] As olive plants around her table; grow up to maturity of age, and ripeness of judgment, and so capable of observing things, and doing the work here ascribed to them: or they rise up in reverence of her, and respect to her, suitable to the relation they stand in to her: or rather it signifies their readiness to show a regard unto her, and their setting about the work of commendation of her in earnest: or else their earliness in doing it; they rise in the morning, as Aben Ezra's note is; her lamp not being extinct in the night. Jarchi interprets these "children" of disciples; but they are to be understood of regenerate persons, young

converts, born in Zion, and brought up by her; the children of that Jerusalem that is the mother of us all, (^{<2540>}Isaiah 54:1 ^{<4845>}Galatians 4:26);

and call her blessed; bless God for her, for such a mother, and wish themselves as happy as she is; they pray for her blessedness, peace, and prosperity, as all Zion's children should, (^{<4926>}Psalm 122:6-9); they pronounce her blessed, as well they may, since she is blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ; and so are all in her family that truly belong to her, her children and her servants, (^{<4844>}Psalm 84:4 ^{<1108>}1 Kings 10:8); see (^{<2169>}Song of Solomon 6:9);

her husband [also], and he praiseth her; that is, he is ready also to rise up and speak in her praise and commendation. Jarchi says this is the holy blessed God. Christ is the church's husband, who is her Maker; (see Gill on "^{<4182>}Proverbs 31:23"); he praises her for her beauty, though she owes it all to him; for her comely parts and gracefulness, which he describes with wonder; for her dress, her garments, though they are his own; for her faith, love, humility, and other graces, though they are his gifts; (see ^{<2108>}Song of Solomon 1:8,10,15 4:1-11 7:1-7).

Ver. 29. *Many daughters have done virtuously*, etc.] This, according to Aben Ezra and Gersom, is what was said by her husband and children, and which seems to be right; especially they may be thought to be the words of her husband. By these "daughters" may be meant false churches, such as the church of Rome and her daughters, who is the mother of harlots, (^{<4687>}Revelation 17:17). These are "many", when the true church of Christ is but one, to whom she is opposed, (^{<2168>}Song of Solomon 6:8,9). These may do many virtuous things externally; may make a great show of religion and devotion; may have a form of godliness, without the power of it; and a name to live, and be dead. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "many daughters have gathered riches"; or "have possessed riches", as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and so the Targum; and in this sense the phrase is sometimes used for getting riches and wealth; see (^{<4687>}Deuteronomy 8:17,18 ^{<2634>}Ezekiel 28:4); and may well be applied to the false churches, the church of Rome and her daughters, who possess great riches and large emoluments, which yet in a short time will come to nothing, (^{<4687>}Revelation 18:17);

but thou excellest them all; in real beauty, in true riches, in purity of doctrine, in simplicity of worship, in holiness of life and conversation, in undefiled religion, in doing good works, properly so called. Christ's church

is “the fairest among women”, (^{<2108>}Song of Solomon 1:8). So Ambrose interprets the daughters of heresies and heretics.

Ver. 30. *Favour is deceitful, and beauty [is] vain*, etc.] A well favoured look, a graceful countenance, symmetry and proportion of parts, natural or artificial beauty, are vain and deceitful; oftentimes under them lies an ill natured, deformed, and depraved mind; nor is the pleasure and satisfaction enjoyed as is promised along with these; and particularly how do they fade^{<1969>} and consume away by a fit of illness, and through old age, and at last by death? And so vain and deceitful are the favour and beauty, the artificial paintings, of Jezebel, that whore of Rome; all her meretricious deckings, dressings, and ornaments; her gaudy pomp and show in her worship, and the places of it; see (^{<66704>}Revelation 17:4). Jarchi interprets this of the grandeur and glory of the kings of the nations;

[but] a woman [that] feareth the Lord, she shall be praised; any single individual, man or woman, that fears the Lord; or a collective body of them, a society consisting of such persons, as the true church of Christ does; who have the grace of fear in their hearts, which is the beginning of wisdom, and includes the whole of religious worship, internal and external, private and public: such are taken notice of and highly valued by the Lord; his eye is upon them; his hand communicates to them much grace; and many benefits are bestowed upon them here, and great honour is conferred upon them, and great goodness is laid up for them.

Ver. 31. *Give her of the fruit of her hands*, etc.] According to Aben Ezra, these are the words of her husband to her children; exhorting them to give her the praise and glory that is due unto her. Jarchi interprets it of the world to come; at which time, it is certain, the graces of the church, and of all believers, which are the fruits of the Spirit in them, and of their hands, as exercised by them, such as faith, hope, love, humility, patience, and others, will be found to honour and praise; and every such person shall have praise of God, (^{<61007>}1 Peter 1:7 ^{<60415>}1 Corinthians 4:5); and also of men and angels; to whom these words may be an exhortation to give it to them;

and let her own words praise her in the gates; where her husband is known, in public assemblies; before angels and men, in the great day; when her works will follow her, and speak for her, and she will be publicly praised by Christ, as all the faithful and righteous will, (^{<66413>}Revelation 14:13 ^{<6121>}Matthew 25:21, 34-40). The Septuagint and Arabic versions

render it, “let her husband be praised in the gate”; (see ^{31:23} Proverbs 31:23); so Ambrose, who interprets it of the happiness of the saints in heaven.

FOOTNOTES

- ft1 -- Gloss. in T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2.
- ft2 -- Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 1. 4. c. 22. 26.
- ft3 -- T. Bab. Ibid. fol. 15. 1.
- ft4 -- Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 55. 1.
- ft5 -- Seder Olam Rabba, c. 15. p. 41.
- ft6 -- T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 30. 2.
- ft7 -- A rad. **l çm** “dominatus est---**l çmn** comparatus, similis, consimilis factus est”, Buxtorf. “Mirum est quod radix **l çm** significans autoritatem cum imperio, significat etiam parabolas vel sermones figuratos---verba quae **µyl çm** vocantur, habent autoritatem, nobis ideam immittunt, dicentis ut nos supereminentis, saltem sapientia, ingenio, doctrina; nos persuadent et pondere suo, quasi imperio noe ducunt”. Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 845.
- ft8 -- **l kçh** “prudentiae”, Munster, Vatablus.
- ft9 -- **hmzm** “cogitationem”, Pagninus, Mercerus; “bonam cogitationem”, Michaelis.
- ft10 -- **PsWy** “addet”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft11 -- **hnqy twl bj t** “gubernacula possidebit”, V. L. “metaphora a nauclero desumpta”, Schultens.
- ft12 -- **hxyl m** “facundiam”, Montanus; “eloquentiam”, Tigurine version; “elocutionem”, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft13 -- **rsWm** “disciplinam”, Tigurine version, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens,
- ft14 -- “Castigationem, correctionem”, Vatablus.
- ft15 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 102. 1.
- ft16 -- **hnpxn** “abscondamus”, Michaelis.
- ft17 -- “Abscondamus nos”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “abscondamus nosmetipsos”, Baynus.

- ft18 -- **μnj** “gratis”, Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft19 -- “Impune”, Junius & Tremellius, Amama.
- ft20 -- **lypt Æl rwg** “sortem tuam conjicies”, Junius & Tremellius; “projicies”, Mercerus, Baynus; “jacies”, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft21 -- **wnl kl hyhy** “erit nobis omnibus”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version; so Cocceius, Schultens, and the Targum.
- ft22 -- “Velox ad facinus”, Claudian. in Rufin. l. 1. v. 240.
- ft23 -- **μnh** “sine causa”, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft24 -- T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 8. 2.
- ft25 -- Misnah Sotah, c. 9. s. 9.
- ft26 -- **twmkj** “sapientiae”, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis.
- ft27 -- Maimon. Hilchot Tephillah, c. 11. s. 2.
- ft28 -- So some in Ben Melech.
- ft29 -- **h[yba** “fluere, vel scaturire faciam”, Baynus; “scatebrae instar effundam”, Cocceius, Michaelis; “scaturiam”, Gussetius; “ebulliam”, Schultens; so Ben Melech.
- ft30 -- **dya** “significat vaporem”, Vatablus, Mercerus, Amama.
- ft31 -- **μhytx[wmm** “de consiliis suis”, Pagninus, Montanus; “ex consiliis suis”, Junius & Tremellius, etc.
- ft32 -- **w[bçy** “saturabuntar”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, etc.
- ft33 -- Josephus de Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 11. s. 1.
- ft34 -- **tbwçm** “requies”, Vatablus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “quies”, Junius & Tremellius; so some in Ben Melech.
- ft35 -- Euseb. Eccel. Hist. l. 3. c. 5.
- ft36 -- Nat. Hist. l. 37. c. 8.
- ft37 -- Terent. Heautont. Act. 4. Sc. 1.

- ft38 -- **hyçwt** “essentiam”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus; “quicquid revera est”, Junius & Tremellius; “solidam firmamque substantiam”, Baynus; “solidum, vel solidam rem”, Schultens.
- ft39 -- So Mercerus, Piscator, Schultens. Gussetius chooses to take the word **gm** for a verb, and renders it, “he delivers it”; that is, sound wisdom to them that walk uprightly; Ebr. Comment. p. 454.
- ft40 -- **rxnl** “ad custodiendum”, Pagninus, Montanus; “ad servandum”, Baynus, Schultens.
- ft41 -- So Schmidt.
- ft42 -- **pyrçym** “complanationes”, Schultens; **lgm** “orbitam”, Montanus; “ab **lg** rotundus”, Gejerus.
- ft43 -- **[r Ærdm** “a via mala”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft44 -- **rçy twj ra** “semitas rectas”, Mercerus; “itinera recta”, Piscator; “itinera planissima”, Schultens.
- ft45 -- **hyrw[n Pwl a** “amieum adolescentiae suae”, Deuteronomy Dieu, Michaelis; “socium juventutis suae”, Schultens.
- ft46 -- **hytb twm la** “ad mortem quoad domum suam”, Cocceius; “ad mortem domum suam”, Gejerus; “quod ad domum suam”, Michaelis.
- ft47 -- **pyapr la** “ad damnatos”, Tigurine version; “ad orcinos”, Schultens.
- ft48 -- **hyab lk** “omnes ingredientes eam”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft49 -- **wdtwy** “superstites erunt”, Tigurine version, Mercerus; “superstitabunt”, Cocceius; “reliqui fient”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “relinquentur”, Michaelis.
- ft50 -- “Nervabuntur”, Schultens.
- ft51 -- **pydgwb** “perfide agentis”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “perfidii”, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft52 -- **wj sy** “eradentur”, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “everrentur”, Schultens.

- ft53 -- **ytrwt** “doctrinae meae”, Piscator, Michaelis; “institutionem meam”, Schultens; “doctrinam meam”, Cocceius.
- ft54 -- **μyyj twnc** “annos vitarum”, Montanus.
- ft55 -- **Æbz[y l a** “non derelinquent te”, Piscator; “non deserent te”, Michaelis; so Aben Ezra and Gersom.
- ft56 -- Laert, Vit. Solon. A. Gell. Noet. Attic. 1. 2. c. 12.
- ft57 -- **^j** “gratiam”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, etc.
- ft58 -- **bwj l kç** “successum optimum”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft59 -- **wh[d** “scito eum”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft60 -- **ywqç** “irrigatio”, V. L. Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Amama, Schultens.
- ft61 -- **Ænw hm** “e substantia tua”, Montanus; “de substantia tua”, Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “de divitiis tuis”, Mercerus, Gejerus; “de opibus tuis”, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft62 -- **Ætawbt l k tyçarm** “de praecipuo totius proventus tui”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft63 -- Ethic. 1. 8. c. 11.
- ft64 -- A like figure see in Virgil. Georgic. 1. 1. v. 49. “---ruperunt horrea
- ft65 -- **rswm** “disciplinam”, V. L. Cocceius, Schultens; “eruditionem”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft66 -- **wtj kwtb** “ad increpationem ejus”, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus; “redargutionem ejus”, Cocceius; “sub redargutione ejus”, Schultens.
- ft67 -- **qypy** “educet”, Montanus; “eruit”, Tigurine version, Vatablus.
- ft68 -- **μynynpm** “prae margaritis”, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft69 -- Deuteronomy Boot. Hist. Gemm. 1. 2. c. 39.
- ft70 -- “Carbunculis”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft71 -- “Vilius argentum est auro, virtutibus aurum”, Horat. Ep. 1. 1. Ep. 1. v. 52.

- ft72 -- Vid. Nebrissens. Quinquagena, c. 16. & Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier l. 1. c. 14. to which Juvenial refers, when speaking of Nestor, “----suos jam dextra computat annos”, Satyr. 10. v. 249.
- ft73 -- **dwbk** “gloria”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft74 -- **μϣϣ** **Ϝ** “lignum vitarum”, Montanus.
- ft75 -- **hykmt** “significatur hoc verbo, firmitas et constantia in tonendo”,
- ft76 -- **hyçwt**, **βουλην**, Sept. “consilium”, Arabic version.
- ft77 -- **bkçt** “dormieris”, V. L. “eum dormies”, Vatablus.
- ft78 -- **γλυκυσ υπνος**, Homer. Odyss. 7. v. 289. & 19. v. 511. Theocrit. Idyll. 11. v. 22, 23.
- ft79 -- So Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis.
- ft80 -- **wyl [bm** “a dominis suis”, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft81 -- **çrtt** “ne ares”, Amama.
- ft82 -- **hwn** “tugurio”, Montanus; “tugurium, vel casam pastoritiam”, Gejerus.
- ft83 -- Not. in Mos. Kimchi **οδοιπορια**, p. 34, 35.
- ft84 -- **ˆwl q μϣrm μyl sk** “unusquisque stultorum suscipit, vel sustinet, ignominiam”, Vatablus.
- ft85 -- “Stolidos vero tollit ignominia”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft86 -- **ytrwt** “doctrinam meam”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Amama; “instructionem meam”, Schultens.
- ft87 -- **ybal ytyyh ˆb** “filius fui patri meo”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft88 -- **hmkj tyçar** “principium sapientiae”, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft89 -- “Principium sapientiae est hoc, comparas sapientiam”, Michaelis; “quae est caput sapientiae eam acquire”, etc. Junius & Tremellius.
- ft90 -- **hmkj hnq** “eme sapientiam”, Pagninus, Cocceius.

- ft91 -- **Ænynq I kl** “in omne possessione tua”, V. L. “in omne acquisitione tua”, Montanus; “prae universis quae possides”, Tigurine version, Vatablus.
- ft92 -- T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 26. 2.
- ft93 -- **Ængmt υπερασπιση σου**, Sept. “proteget te”, V. L. “muniet te”, Montanus, Tigurine version; “cinget te”, Gejerus.
- ft94 -- **Prt I a** “ne remittas”, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft95 -- **μy[r Ærdb rçat** “in via malorum ne te beatum existimes”, Tigurine version; “ne beatam praedices viam malorum”, Michaelis.
- ft96 -- **rwaw Æl wh** “vadens et illuminans”, Montanus; “ambulans et lucens”, Gejerus; “pergens et lucens”, Michaelis; “procedens et lucens”, Schultens.
- ft97 -- **μwyh ^wkn d[** “usque ad paratum diem”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft98 -- **rmçm I km** “prae omni custodia”, Vatablus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens; so Aben Ezra and Ben Melech.
- ft99 -- **wnky** “dirigantur”, Tigurine version, Mercerus; “recte apparentur aut disponantur”, Vatablus.
- ft100 -- “Stabilientur”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; “constabilientur”, Schultens.
- ft101 -- Rudens, Act. 2. Sc. 3. v. 84. Poenulus, 1, 2. v. 112.
- ft102 -- **φωνα γλυκερωτερα η μελικηρω**, Theocrit. Idyll. 21.
- ft103 -- Satyr. 6. v. 180. “Lingua dicta dulcia dabis, corde amara facilis”, Plauti Truculentus, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 77. Cistellaria, Act. 1. Sc. 1. v. 70, 71, 72.
- ft104 -- **wkmty** “sustentabunt”, Montanus; “sustinant”, Vatablus; “sustentent”, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft105 -- Vid. Turnebi Adversar. l. 13. c. 19. & Sept. vers. in Jer. ii. 23.
- ft106 -- **[dt al** “non scires”, Cocceius; “non cognosces”, Baynus.
- ft107 -- “Haud curat”, Schultens.
- ft108 -- **sl pt ^p μyyj j ra** “iter vitae ne forte libraverit”, Schultens.

- ft109 -- “Viam vitae non appendit, vel ponderat”, Gejerus; so Luther; “iter vitae non expandit”, Noldius, p. 249. No. 2008.
- ft110 -- Bacchides, Act. 3. Sc. 1. v. 5. & Sc. 3. v. 67.
- ft111 -- Truculentus, Act. 2. Sc. 7. v. 20.
- ft112 -- **Æybx** [“dolores tui”, Montanus, Cocceius, Michaelis.
- ft113 -- Heraclitus de Incredibil. c. 3.
- ft114 -- **tmhn** “rugies”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Baynus, Gejerus, Amama, Michaelis.
- ft115 -- Stromat. 1. 1. p. 274.
- ft116 -- **Æl wyhy** “erunt tui”, Mercerus, Cocceius; “erunt tibi”, Baynus; “existent tibi”, Schultens.
- ft117 -- “Cervus erat forma praestanti”, etc. Virgil. Aeneid 1. 7.
- ft118 -- **hgçt** “errabis”, Montanus, Raynus, Cocceius; “hallucinaberis”, Vatablus; “errato”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft119 -- “Errares”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “aberrares”, Cocceius.
- ft120 -- **rswm ãyab** “eo quod non audivit eruditionem”, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “propter neglectam institutionem”, Piscator; “propter non admissam disciplinam”, Noldius, p. 181.
- ft121 -- “Sine correctione et emendatione”, Vatablus.
- ft122 -- **rzi** “extraneo”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft123 -- “Pro alieno”, Tigurine version; “pro alio peregrino”, Michaelis.
- ft124 -- **sprth** “praebe conculcandum te”, Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis.
- ft125 -- **Æy[r bhr** “evehe proximum tuum”, Tigurine version; “magnifica”, so some in Vatablus.
- ft126 -- “Multiplica amicos tuos”, so some in Bayne.
- ft127 -- **dym** “statim”, Deuteronomy Dieu; “subito”, Noldius, p. 606. No. 1630. “ilico, repente”, so some in Eliae Tishbi, p. 143.

- ft128 -- So Horace gives it as an example of labour----"Parvula (nam exemplo est) magni formica laboris", etc. Sermon. l. 1. Sat. 1. v. 33, 34, 35. & Phocylides, v. 152-159.
- ft129 -- Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 5. c. 8. Vid. Aelian. Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 25. & l. 6. c. 43.
- ft130 -- Hist. de Animal. l. 1. c. 1.
- ft131 -- "Acts veluti ingentem formicae farris acervum", etc. Virgil. Aeneid. l. 4. v. 402, etc. So Horat. Satyr. 1. v. 36.
- ft132 -- Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 30. Plutarch. vol. 2. de Solert. Animal. p. 968.
- ft133 -- Vat. Hist. l. 1. c. 12.
- ft134 -- "Inopi metuens formica senectae", Georgic. l. 1. v. 186. So Horace, ut supra. Juvenal. Satyr. 6. v. 360.
- ft135 -- Stromat. l. 1. p. 286.
- ft136 -- bkçt "jacebis", Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus; "cubabis", Piscator, Cocceius.
- ft137 -- Aelian. de Animal. l. 4. c. 43.
- ft138 -- twmwnt j [m twnc j [m "parvis somnis, parvis dormitationibus", Pagninus; "pauculis somnis, pauculis dormitationibus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft139 -- bkçl "cubando", Junius & Tremellius; "cubare", Piscator; "ad cubandum", Cocceius.
- ft140 -- ^nm çyak "tanquam vir clypei", Montanus; "vir clypeatus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, etc.
- ft141 -- ^wa çya l [yl b "homo Belijahal, vir iniquitatis", Montanus, Vatablus, Baynus, Michaelis.
- ft142 -- "In hunc intende digitum", Plauti Pseudolus, Act. 4. Sc. 7. v. 45. "--aliis dat digito literas", Ennius.
- ft143 -- Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. de Consul. Mallii Paneg. v. 311.
- ft144 -- µyndm "contentiones", Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus; "jurgia", V. L. "lites", Baynus, Cocceius; "litigia", Schultens.

- ft145 -- j l çy “mittet”, Pagninus, Montanus; “immittit”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Schultens, Michaelis.
- ft146 -- aprm ^yaw “et non sanitas”, Pagninus, Montanus; “curatio”, Junius & Tremellius; “medicina”, Piscator, Cocceius.
- ft147 -- wçpn twb[wt “abominatio ejus animae”, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft148 -- twmr µyny[“oculi clati”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.
- ft149 -- ^wa twbçj m “cogitationes iniquitatis”, Montanus; “cogitationes vanitatis”, Cocceius.
- ft150 -- So Vatablus, Mercerus, etc.
- ft151 -- µybkz j ypy “qui efflat mendacia”, Piscator, Michaelis.
- ft152 -- Æyl [rmçt “excubabit apud te”, Cocceius; “excubias aget super te”, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft153 -- Æj wçt ayh “illa ipsa spatiabitur tecum”, Schultens.
- ft154 -- “Otia si tollas periere cupidinis arcus”, Ovid. de Remed. Amor. l. 1. v. 139. Quaeritur Aegistheus, “quare sit factus adulter?--in promptu causa est, desidiosus erat”. Ibid. v. 161, 162.
- ft155 -- [r tçam “a muliere mali”, Baynus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft156 -- hyrkn ^wçl tqj j m “a lenitate linguae extraneae”, Montanus; “a laevitate linguae peregrinae”, Michaelis; “ex lubrica glabritie linguae peregrinae”, Schultens.
- ft157 -- çpn “animam”, Pagninus, Montanus, etc.
- ft158 -- Plauti Bacehides, Act. 4. Sc. 9. v. 15. “Accede ad ignem hunc”, Terent. Eunuehus, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 5.
- ft159 -- το εις πυρ και εις γυναικα, apud Maximum, Eclog. c. 39.
- ft160 -- “Periculosae plenum opus aleae tractas: et incedis per ignes suppositos cineri doloso”, Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode. 1.
- ft161 -- j qny al “non insons, vel immunis”, Schultens; so Gejerus.
- ft162 -- b[r yk “quia esurit”, Cocceius, Michaelis.

- ft163 -- **bl rsj** “deficit corde”, Pagninus, Montanus; “caret corde”, Mercerus, Gejerus; so Michaelis.
- ft164 -- Plutarch. in Vita Solon. p. 90.
- ft165 -- **hnç[y awh** “ipse faeiet illud”, Montanus; “ipse faciet hoc”, so some in Vatablus; “is id faciet, sive facit”, Cocceius; “ille facit id”, Michaelis; “is patrabit illud”, Schultens.
- ft166 -- “Secat ille cruentis verberibus”, Juvenal. Satyr. 10. v. 316. Vid. A. Gell. Noct. Attic. 1. 17. c. 18. Horat. Satyr. 1. 1. Sat. 2. v. 41, 42.
- ft167 -- Valer. Maximus, 1. 6. c. 1. s. 13.
- ft168 -- **ynp açy al** “non accipiet facies”, Montanus; “non acceptabit faciem ullius redemptionis”, Mercerus, Gejerus; “ullius lytri”, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft169 -- **[dm** “cognatum”, Piscator.
- ft170 -- “Notam”, Montanus, Michaelis.
- ft171 -- **ybnça d[b** “per cancellum meum”, Montanus; “per cancellos”, Tigurine version, Michaelis.
- ft172 -- **μynbb** “inter filios”, Pagninus, etc.
- ft173 -- **bl rsj** “carentem corde”, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “destitutum corde”, Schultens.
- ft174 -- **d[xy** “intelligitur incessus, compositus et pomposus”, Piscator; “magnis et patheticis possibus”, Michaelis; “est aliquid grande et audax in verbo”, Schultens.
- ft175 -- “Fallendique vias mille ministret amor”, Tibullus ad Junonem, 6. v. 12.
- ft176 -- **bl trxn** “cauta corde”, Tigurine version, Mercerus: Gejerus; “retento corde”, Cocceius.
- ft177 -- Targ. Onk. in Gen. xxxiv. 31.
- ft178 -- “Mille modi veneris”, Ovid de Arte Amandi, 1. 3. prope finem.
- ft179 -- **wb hqyzj h** “apprehendit eum”, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

- ft180 -- **hynp hz[h]** “et roboravit facies suas”, Montanus; “vultumque suum obfirmavit”, Schultens, so Michaelis; “obfirmabat”, Cocceius.
- ft181 -- **rj çl** “ad quaerendum mane”, Montanus.
- ft182 -- Vid. Homer. Odyss. 4. c. 299. & Odyss. 7. prope finem.
- ft183 -- Nat. Hist. 1. 19. c. 1.
- ft184 -- Ibid.
- ft185 -- Philostrat. Vit. Apollen. 1. 2. c. 9.
- ft186 -- Plin. Nat. Hist. 1. 13. c. 1.
- ft187 -- Clemens Alex. Paedagog. 1. 2. c. 8. p. 177.
- ft188 -- “Uctis cubilibus pellicum”, Epod. Ode. 5. v. 69, 70.
- ft189 -- **hwrn** “inebriemur”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft190 -- Catullus de Acme, Ep. 43. c. 11.
- ft191 -- **wtybb çyah ^ya yk** “quia non est vir in domo suo”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, etc.
- ft192 -- **qwj wm Ærdb** “in via longinqua”, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens; “in via a longinquo”, Montanus.
- ft193 -- **wdyb** “in manu sua”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft194 -- **askh µwyl** “in die plenae lunae”, V. L. Michaelis; “novilunii”, so some in Vatablus, Piscator; “ad diem interlunii”, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft195 -- Satirar. 1. 1. Sat. 9. v. 69.
- ft196 -- **wtj h** “declinare facit eum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus; “flexit”, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelin; “inclinavit illum”, Cocceius.
- ft197 -- “Verbosa gaudet Venus Ioquela”, Catullus ad Camer. Ep. 53. v. 20.
- ft198 -- **hj ql brb** “multitudine discipline suae”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “doctrinae suae”, Michaelis.

- ft199 -- **ματπ** “subito”, Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft200 -- **lywa rswm la sk**[k “sicut compes ad castigationem stulti”, Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus.
- ft201 -- “Abiens post cam, quasi veniens ad compedes ad castigationem stultorum”, Gejerus.
- ft202 -- “Velut compeditus”, Junius & Tremellius; “velut in compede ibat”, Michaelis; “tanquam constricto ad pedes capite”, Schultens.
- ft203 -- “Spleu ridere facit, cogit amare jecur”, Ovid. “Si torrere jecur quaeris idoneum”, Horat. Carmin. l. 4. Ode 1. v. 12. “Cum tibi flagrans amor et libido saeviet circa jecur ulcerosum”. Ibid l. 1. Ode 25. v. 13, 15.
- ft204 -- **μybr** “multos magnosque”, Gejerus.
- ft205 -- See Dr. Kennicott’s Dissert. 1. p. 110.
- ft206 -- **μyμx** [**αναρψμητοι**, Sept. so Arab. “numerosi”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Amama, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; so Bootius, Animadv. l. 4. c. 11. s. 2.
- ft207 -- **ykrd** “viae”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, etc.
- ft208 -- Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 38.
- ft209 -- “Januam hane orci”, Bacchides, Act. 3. Sc. 1. v. 1.
- ft210 -- **tbytn tyb** “in mediis semitis”, V. L. “inter semitas”, Tigurine version, Baynus; so some in Vatablus; “in mediis compitis”, Schultens; to the Targum, Sept. and Arabic versions.
- ft211 -- **bl wnybh** “facite cor intelligere”, Baynus, Mercerus; “facite ut cor vestrum intelligat”, so some in Vatablus; “acquirite animum sapientem”, Gejerus.
- ft212 -- **μydygn** “principalia, i.e. digna principibus”, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; “ducalia”, Gussetius, p. 485.
- ft213 -- “Praecipua quaedam”, Tigurine versions.
- ft214 -- **qdxb** “cum justitia”, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis; **μετα δικαιοσυνης**, Sept.

- ft215 -- “Gloriatio de justitia sua, vel invitatio ad accipiendam justitiam per fidem”, Cocceius.
- ft216 -- **μνννρμ** “gemmis”, Baynus; “prae gemmis politis”, Schultens.
- ft217 -- “Margaritas”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; “unionibus”, Cocceius.
- ft218 -- “Carbunculis”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft219 -- **hmr [ytnkç** “habito astutum”, Cocceius; “prudentiam”, Michaelis; “solertiam”, Schultens.
- ft220 -- **hyçwt** “essentia”, Montanus, Tigurine version; “quicquid est”, Junius & Tremellius; “realitas”, Michaelis; “soliditas”, Schultens.
- ft221 -- **μybydn** “munifici sive liberales”, Vatablus; “ingenui”, Junius & Tremellius, Gejerus; “munifici”, Piscator; “generosi”, Schultens.
- ft222 -- **yrj çm** “quaerentes diluculo me”, Montanus; “qui me mane quaerunt”, Tigurine version, Michaelis.
- ft223 -- “At once” and “once for all”.
- ft224 -- **çy** “quod est”, Junius & Tremellius; “rem solido vereque subsistentem”, Gejerus; “solidum illud”, Schultens.
- ft225 -- **wkrd tyçar ynnq** “possidet me principium viae suae”, Pagninus, Michaelis, Schultens; “habuit me principium viae suae”, Cocceius.
- ft226 -- **ytksn** “uncta sum”, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; “inuncta fui”, Gejerus.
- ft227 -- **ydbkn** “aggravati”, Pagninus; “praegravati”, Vatablus; “gravati”, Michaelis; “honorabiles”, Gejerus.
- ft228 -- **w [bj h** “defixi”, Montanus; “mergerentur”, Tigurine version; “immersi”, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft229 -- **twxwj** “quae extra sunt”, Tigurine version, Vatablus; “exteriora”, Cocceius, Michaelis.
- ft230 -- **çar** “caput”, Montanus, Tigurine version; “summan”, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft231 -- In Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 452, 453.

- ft232 -- gwj wqj b “describendo circulum”, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft233 -- wl xa “cum eo”, V. L. “apud eum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, etc.
- ft234 -- ἄwma αρμυζουσα, Sept. “cuneta componens”, V. L. “artifex vel opifex”, Gejerus; so Schindler, col. 90.
- ft235 -- “Nutritius”, Montanus, Pagninus, Baynus; “educans”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft236 -- “Alumnus”, Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus; “alumna”, Schultens; “in sinu gestatus filius”, Cocceius; so Gussetius, p. 77. and Noldius, p. 379. No. 1884. and Stockins, p. 71.
- ft237 -- μυ[wç]ç “deliciae”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; “obleclationes”, Schultens.
- ft238 -- tqj çm “ludens”, V. L. Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius; “ludebam”, Pagninus; “ludo”, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus; “lusitans”, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft239 -- “Laetificans in orbe habitabili terram ejus”, Junius & Tremellius, Amama; “ridens, vel faciens ridere alios”, Baynus.
- ft240 -- “Sub galls cantum consultor ubi ostia pulsat”, Horat. Sat. 1. 1. Sat. 1. v. 10.
- ft241 -- μyyj “vitas”, Montanus.
- ft242 -- qpy “educet”, Pagninus, Montanus; “hauriet”, V. L. “haurit”, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “depromit”, Schultens.
- ft243 -- waj j “qui vero aberraverit a me”, Michaelis.
- ft244 -- Vid. Lexic. Heb. col. 623.
- ft245 -- hj bj “victimam suam”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Baynus, Mercerus, so Ben Melech.
- ft246 -- T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 77. 1. & Nidda, fol. 19. 1.
- ft247 -- Suidas in voce πομυα.
- ft248 -- Apud Philander. in Vitruv. de Architect. 1. 16. c. 5. p. 281.
- ft249 -- Aristoph. Equi, Act. 3. Sc. 1. p. 355. & Scholia in ib.

- ft250 -- Hygin Fab. 274.
- ft251 -- Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 2. c. 6. p. 45. & l. 4. c. 27. p. 179.
- ft252 -- **ypg I** [“super alas”; Montanus, so Ben Melech; “super pinnis”, Piscator, Amama; “in pinnaculis”: Cocceius; “super convexitatibus”, Schultens.
- ft253 -- **μyατp** “imperitiam”, Tigurine version; “stultitias”, Vatablus; “fatuitates”, Piscator, Schultens; “stoliditates”, Gejerus, Gussetius, p. 703.
- ft254 -- **wyj w** “et vivetis”, Pagninus, Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.
- ft255 -- **μyγj twnc ÆI wpyswy** “et addent tibi annos vitae”, Baynus, Cocceius.
- ft256 -- **ask I** [“super solium”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; “super solio”, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens; “in thronum”, Cocceius.
- ft257 -- From **μwr** “altus”; hence that of Virgil--“altae moenia Romae”, Aeneid. l. 1. v. 7.
- ft258 -- “Furtiva Verus”, Ovid de Arte Amandi, l. 1. “Furta Jovis, furtiva munuscula”, Catullus ad Mantium, Ep. 66. v. 140, 145. So Propertius, l. 2. eleg. 30. v. 28. **γλυκυ τι κλεπτομενον μελημα κυπριδος**, Pindar; for which he was indebted to Solomon, according to Clemens of Alexandria, Paedagog. l. 3. p. 252.
- ft259 -- **μyrtc** “latebraram”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.
- ft260 -- “Quas habeat veneres aliens pecunia nescis”, Juvenal. Satyr. 13.
- ft261 -- **hymr Pk** “vola doli”, Montanus; “fraudenta manu”, Tigurine version, Cocceius, Schultens; so Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis.
- ft262 -- So Mercerus.
- ft263 -- **μyχwrj** “acuti”, Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 55. col. 668.
- ft264 -- Tikkune Zohar. Correct. 47. fol. 87. 2.
- ft265 -- **smj hsky μy[çr yp** “os impiorum operiet injuriam”, Montanus, Baynus; “operit iniquitem”, Vatablus, Mercerus.
- ft266 -- Orat. 51. Philip. 9.

- ft267 -- **μytpç l ywa** “stultus labiis”, Montanus, etc.
- ft268 -- **μwtb Æl wh** “qui ambulat perfecte”, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft269 -- **rrw[t.**
- ft270 -- **bl rsj** “carcutis corde”; Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft271 -- **wnpxy** “abscondent”, Pagninus, Montanus; “abscondunt”, V. L. “occultant”, Michaelis.
- ft272 -- **htj m** “terrorem accersit”, Tigurine version; “consternatio propinqua”, Cocceius; “terror”, Vatablus, Michaelis.
- ft273 -- **htj m** “consternatio”, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft274 -- **rmwç** “observat”, Tigurine version; “servat”, Cocceius; “observans”, Schultens.
- ft275 -- **h[tm** “faciens errare”, Montanus, Gejerus; “seduceus sese”, Tigurine version; “errare facit”, some in Vatablus; “facit oberrare”, Cocceius.
- ft276 -- **tj kwt bz[** “qui relinquit increpationem”, Pagninus; “deserens”, Montanus, Schultens; “derelinquit”, Piscator; “deserit”, Cocceius.
- ft277 -- “Est vir laborium falsitatis”, Piscator, “vel fallacium”, Gejerus.
- ft278 -- **l dj y al** “non cessabit”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis; “non cessat”, Piscator.
- ft279 -- **hmz twç[** “facere scelus”, Montanus, Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Michaelis; “perpetrare scelus”, Piscator; “patrare facinus”, Schultens.
- ft280 -- **qwj çk** “veluti risus”, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft281 -- Vid. Schultens de Defect. Hod. Ling. Heb. s. 216.
- ft282 -- So some in Gejerus.
- ft283 -- **ˆty** “dabit”, Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus; “justis dat quod cupiunt”, Tigurine version; “dabit Deus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis; “dat Deus”, Mercerus, Gejerus.

- ft284 -- **μl w[dwsy qydxw** “atjusti fundamentum perpetuum est”, Tigurine versions; “justo vero sit, vel est fundamentum perpetuum”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft285 -- “Fundamentum mundi”, Hebraei in Mercer. Maimonides apud Grotius.
- ft286 -- “Est”, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.
- ft287 -- **htj m** “pavor”, V. L. Pagninus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus; “consternatio”, Vatablus, Cocceius, Michaelis.
- ft288 -- So Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft289 -- **trkt** “succidetur”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft290 -- **twkpht wçl** “lingua perversitatum”, Montanus, Junius & Tremeilius, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft291 -- “Novit tantum perversa”, Michaelis,
- ft292 -- **hml ç ba** “lapis perfectus”, Montanus, Gejerus.
- ft293 -- **μετρα νεμειν τα δικαια**, etc. Phocylid. Poem. Admon. v. 12, 13.
- ft294 -- **mydgb** “perfidiosorum”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “perfidorum”, Cocceius, Michaelis.
- ft295 -- **rçyt** “rectam facit”, Cocceius; “complanat viam ejus”, Schultens.
- ft296 -- **wt[çrb** “in impietate sua”, Tigurine version, Montanus, Baynus, Michaelis; “improbate sua”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “in injustitia sua”, Cocceius; “in improbitate sua turbulenta”, Schultens.
- ft297 -- **μynwa tlj wt** “expectatio virium”, Gejerus; “spes in viribus collocata”, Michaelis; “spes confidentium in divitiis”, Munster; so some in Vatablus; “divitiarum”, Pagniaus, Baynus; “roborum”, Montanus, Amama.
- ft298 -- **tj çy** “corrumpet”, Schultens; so Pagninus, Montanus; “corrumpit”, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft299 -- **bl rsj** “carens corde”, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “destitutus est corde”, Schultens.

- ft300 -- l ykr Æl wh “obambulat ut mercator”, Tigurine version; “qui incedit nundinator”, Schultens.
- ft301 -- rbd “verbum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Baynus.
- ft302 -- rbd hskm “tegit rem”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “velat negotium”, Schultens.
- ft303 -- twl bj t “gubernationes”, Schultens.
- ft304 -- Ðwy brb “in amplitudine consilarii”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft305 -- [wry [r “frangendo frangetur”, Michaelis; so Pagninus and others.
- ft306 -- µy[qwt “comploidentes”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; “defigentes”, Mercerus.
- ft307 -- ḥj tça “mulier gratiae”, Montanus, Baynus, Gejerus, Michaelis; “quae gratia praedita est”, Tigurine version; “uxor gratia pollens”, Schultens.
- ft308 -- w “ut”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens.
- ft309 -- µxyr[“violenti”, Piscator, Schultens; “formidabiles”, Gejerus.
- ft310 -- Ebr. Comment. p. 692.
- ft311 -- µyyj l “ad vitas”, Montanus.
- ft312 -- µ[j trsw Heb. “recedens a gusta”, Piscator; “cujus recessit sapor”, Schultens.
- ft313 -- bwj Æa “tantummodo bonum quid est”, Michaelis; “tantum bonum”, Cocceius; “nihil cupiunt quod bonum non sit”, Mercerus; “tamen bonum quid”, Gussetius, p. 39.
- ft314 -- rçym “plus aequo”, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “plus quam aequum est”, Cocceius; “prae quam rectum est, seu plus aequo”, Michaelis.
- ft315 -- rwsj ml “ad egestatem”. Junius & Tremellius, Picator; “ad penuriam”, Cocceius; “ad rasam egestatem”, Schultens.
- ft316 -- hkrb çpn “anima benedictionis”, Montanus, Baynus, Cocceius, Michaelis; “anima benedictioni dedita”, Schultens.
- ft317 -- rybçm “frangentis”, Montanus.

- ft318 -- **rj ç** “qui mane quaerit”, Vatablus; “quarens mane”, Montanus; “qui mane vestigat”, Schultens; “bene consurgit diluculo”, V. L. so the Targum and Ben Melech.
- ft319 -- **ˆwxr çqby** “quaerit favorem, beneplacitum”, Vatablus, Michaelis; “benevolentiam”, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft320 -- **j ql** “qui docet”, Pagninus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft321 -- “Capit”, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “capit salutari doctrina”, Michaelis.
- ft322 -- “Allicit”, Drusius, Gejerus.
- ft323 -- **r [b** “instar bruti indocilis est”, Michaelis.
- ft324 -- **qypy** “educet”, Pagninus, Montanus, “hauriet”, V. L. “haurit”, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft325 -- **l yj tça** “mulier virtutis”, Montanus, Vatablus; “uxor strenua”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; “mulier fortis”, Pagninus, Gejerus.
- ft326 -- Such as are called Cossi, Tabani, Teredines, Thrypes; Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 1. c. 33. & l. 16. c. 41.
- ft327 -- **j pçm** “judicium”, Pagninns, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus.
- ft328 -- **wl db[** “servus sibiipsi”, Montanus; “suiipius”, Vatablus; “sibimet”, Schultens.
- ft329 -- **[dwy** “novit”, Mercerus, Michaelis; so Vulgate Latin.
- ft330 -- **yrzka** “sunt miserationes crudelis”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Aben Ezra in Mercerus, so some Jewish writers in Vatablus.
- ft331 -- **bl rsj** “deficiens corde”, Pagninus; “carens corde”, Montanus; “deficitur corde”, Schultens.
- ft332 -- **dwxm** “venationem”, Munster, Schultens; “venatum”, Tigurine version.
- ft333 -- “Praesidium”, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft334 -- **ˆty** “dabit”, Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus, Mercerus.

- ft335 -- “Radicem justorum dabit Deus”, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft336 -- [r çqwm µytpç [çpb “in praevaricatione labiorum laqueos malus”, Montanus, Michaelis, Schultens, so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius; “vel laqueus hominis mali”, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft337 -- çya yp yrpm “de fructu oris viri”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Schultens.
- ft338 -- wl bwçy “reddet ei”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; “restituet ei”, Munster, so Aben Ezra; “ei refundet”, Schultens.
- ft339 -- µwyb “eo die quo irritatur”, Tigurine version; “eodem die”, Junius & Tremellius; so Banyus, Merceras, Gejerus.
- ft340 -- “Cognoscitur ex ira sua”, Munster.
- ft341 -- j ypy “effiat”, Junius & Tremellius; “spirat”, Schultens.
- ft342 -- aprm “medicinae”, Junius & Tremellius; “medicina”, Piscator, Cocceius; “sanatio”, Michaelis; “sanatrix”, Schultens.
- ft343 -- h[ygra d[“at dum nictem”, Schultens.
- ft344 -- yçrj .
- ft345 -- [r “malo”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis.
- ft346 -- wnwxr “est beneplacitum ejus”, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “accepti sunt ei”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.
- ft347 -- hnwma yç[“facientibus veritatem”, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “facientes veritatem”, Montanus; “qui faciunt veritatem”, Cocceius.
- ft348 -- “Manus fraudulentiae”, Michaelis; “dolosa”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus; “fraudenta”, Tigurine version, Vatablus.
- ft349 -- hgad “solicitude”, Tigurine version, Montanus, Piscator, Michaelis; “solicitude anxia”, Mercerus, Gejerus; “solicita anxietas”, Junius & Tremellius; “anxietatem”, Schultens.
- ft350 -- qydx wh[rm rty “justus explorat viam suam prae socio suo”, Gejerus; “explorat pro compascuo suo justus”, Schultens; “explorate ducit proximum suum justus”, Cocceius.

- ft351 -- Vid. Schindler. Lexic. col. 653.
- ft352 -- **hymr** “vir dolosus”, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; “fraudentus”, Montanus.
- ft353 -- Vid. Stockium, p. 388.
- ft354 -- **whj rgy pda wh** “substantia hominis pretiosi est aurum”, Deuteronomy Dieu, so some in Mercerus; “substantia hominis praestantis est aurum”, Gussetius, p. 255.
- ft355 -- **rswm** “obedivit castigationem”, Baynus, so Gejerus.
- ft356 -- “Castigatur a patre, vel castigatus patris”, Scultens, so Deuteronomy Dieu.
- ft357 -- “Anima cupido praevaricatorum est violentis”, Gussetius, p. 524.
- ft358 -- **pydgb** “perfidiosorum”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “perfidorum”, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft359 -- **htj m** “consternatio”, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis; “terrebitur”, Tigurine version.
- ft360 -- **rqc rbd** “verbum falsitatis”, Montanus, Michaelis; “verbum fuci”, Schulteus.
- ft361 -- **cyaby** “foetere facit”, Vatablus, Mercerus; “foetere faciet”, Montanus; “foetere fecit foetorem”, Gussetius, p. 114. “foetorem spargit”, Schultens.
- ft362 -- “Se ipse foetere facit”, Coccei Lexic. col. 77. “foetidum se reddit”, Piscator.
- ft363 -- **tajj** “peccatum”; Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius, Michaelis; “lapsationem”, Schultens.
- ft364 -- “Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator”, Juvenal. Sat. 10. v. 23.
- ft365 -- **qr** “certe”, Vatablus; “vere”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus.
- ft366 -- “Levis per superbiam dabit contentionam”, Gejerus.
- ft367 -- “Deuteronomy malo quaesitis vix gaudet tertius baeres”, Herat.
- ft368 -- **dy l [** “in manu”, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “super manu”, Gussetius, p. 310. “super manum”, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft369 -- “Usque ad manum”, Montanus.

- ft370 -- **hab hwat** “desiderium venieus”, V. L. Pagninus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft371 -- **μl çy** “in pace versabitur”, V. L. “fruetur pace”, Vatablus; “donatur pace”, Junius & Tremellius; “pacabitur”, Cocceius; “salvabitur”, Syriac version.
- ft372 -- **υγiαινει**, Sept.
- ft373 -- **l bj y** “corrumpetur”; Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft374 -- **trwt** “doctrina”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft375 -- **ˆj** “gratiam”, Pagninus, Montanus. Vatablus. Mercerus. Drusius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft376 -- “Successum bonum dat gratia”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft377 -- **çrpy** “expandit”, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft378 -- **[rb** “in malum”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, etc.
- ft379 -- **μynwma ryx** “legatus veritatum”, Montanus, Vatablus.
- ft380 -- **[wry** “conteretur”, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus; “conquassabitur”, Cocceius; “fragetur”, Michaelis; “infringetur”, Schultens, so Ben Melech.
- ft381 -- **bwj μl çy μyqydx taw** “et justis reddet bonum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “justes remunerabit Deus bono”, Michaelis; “justis autem bonum rependet”, Tigurine version, Piscator, so Cocceius.
- ft382 -- **j pçm al b** “ob non jus”, Vatablus; i.e. “ob injustitiam”, Michaelis; “sine justitia”, Gejerum.
- ft383 -- **wrj ç** “mane castigat eum”, Munster; “matutinat ei disciplinam”, Michaelis.
- ft384 -- **μyçn twmkj** “sapientes mulieres”, Munster, Baynus; so the Septuagint and Arabic versions.
- ft385 -- **rb** “vacuum”, V. L. Munster, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Amama; so the Syriac version.

- ft386 -- “Triticum”, Baynus.
- ft387 -- **swba** “area”, Gussetius, p. 14. Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft388 -- Sepher Shorash. rad **sva** & R. Joseph Kimchi in Abendana in loc.
- ft389 -- “Fortis arat valido rusticus arva bove”, Tibullus, l. 2. Eleg. 2. v. 14.
- ft390 -- **j ypy** “efflabit”, Montanus; “efflat”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft391 -- **l ysk çyal dgnm kl** “e regione viri stulti”, Deuteronomy Dieu; so Gussetius, p. 495. and Schultens
- ft392 -- “Abi ut stes cora in viro stolido”, Cocceius.
- ft393 -- **μσα ψl y μυl ywa φρονας χλευαζει πλημμελεια**, Aquila & Theodotion in Drusius; “delictum illudit fatuos”, Gejerus.
- ft394 -- **ˆwxr** “benevolentia”, Montanus, Baynus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft395 -- “Acceptatio”, Cocceius, Gussetius.
- ft396 -- **wçpn trm** “amaritudine animae suae”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft397 -- **br[ty al** “non immiscet se”, Michaelis, so Tigurine version; “non miscebit sese”, Baynus; “non intermiscet se”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft398 -- **wyl [m** “de super eo”, Montanus; “de super semet”, Schultens.
- ft399 -- “Et super cum erit vir bonus”, V. L. Deuteronomy Dieu.
- ft400 -- **wrçal** “gressum illius, sc. sermonis”, Baynus, so some in Mercerus.
- ft401 -- **t[d wrytky** “imponent coronam sibi scientiam”, Montanus; “coronant se scientia”, Piscator, so Ben Melech.
- ft402 -- “Coronabunt scientiam”, Baynus; “ornant scientiam”, Drusius.
- ft403 -- **mybr ryç[ybhaw** “et amatores divitiis spissi”, Schultens; “dilectores autem divitis multi sunt”, Piscator. “Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos”, Ovid. Trist. Eleg. 8. “Dat census honores, census amicitias”, ib. Fasti, l. 1. so Phocylides, v. 925, 926.

- ft404 -- **μywn** [“modestorum”, Montanus, Mercerus; “mansuetos”, Cocceius.
- ft405 -- **ϙrj** “arant”, Baynus; “arantibus”, Amama; “verbum proprie significat arare”, Piscator.
- ft406 -- **rtwm** “abundantia”, Tigurine version, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft407 -- **rwsj ml** “ad defectum”, Pagninus, Montanus; “ad egestatem”, Tigurine version, Piscator, Cocceius.
- ft408 -- **tma d** [“testis veritatis”, Montanus, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft409 -- **twϙpn** “vitas; animam pro vita usurpari notum”, Gejerus.
- ft410 -- **j ypy** “efflat”, Tigurine version, Piscator, Gejerus; “spirat”, Schultens; “efflabit”, Monatnus.
- ft411 -- **hmr̄m** “dolus”, Montanus, Vatablus; “fraus”, Cocceius.
- ft412 -- Zohar in Exod. fol. 67. 3, 4.
- ft413 -- **ttj m** “formidat princeps”, Tigurine version; “consternatio”, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft414 -- “Consternatio macici”, Gussetius, p. 785. “consternatio tabifica”, Schultens; “contritio maciei”, Gejerus; “terror tenuitatis”, Mercerus, Gersom.
- ft415 -- **μyπα Ἐρα** “longus iris”, Vatablus; “longus naribus”, Montanus; “longus narium”, Schultens.
- ft416 -- **j wr rxq** “brevis spiritu”, Montanus, Vatablus. Cocceius, Mercerus, Michaelis; “curtus spiritu”, Schultens.
- ft417 -- **μwrm** “attollit”, Mercerus, Piscator; “alte proclamat”, Schultens; “elevat”, Baynus.
- ft418 -- **aprm bl** “cor leve”, Baynus; “cor lene”, Mercerus; “cor lenitatis”, Gejerus, so Ben Melech.
- ft419 -- “Animus sanans”, Junius & Tremellius, so the Tigurine version; “sanator”, Gussetius, p. 800.
- ft420 -- **μyrc̄b yyj** “vitae carniū”, Montanus; “vita carniū”, V. L. Pagninus, Michaelis.

- ft421 -- Amorum, l. 1. Eleg. 15. v. 1. & de Remed. Amor. l. 1. in fine.
- ft422 -- Epigr. l. 11. Ep. 21.
- ft423 -- **wt[rb]** “propter suam malitiam”, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft424 -- “In malam suum”, Junius & Tremellius, Amama, so some in Mercerus.
- ft425 -- **tajj μymal dsj** “beneficentia expiatio est populi”, Grotius; “sacrificium expiatorium”, Tigurine version; “velut sacrificium pro peccato”, Vatablus, Gejerus; “gratuita beneficentia nationibus est aliquid sacrificium peccati expiatorium”, Gussetius, p. 74.
- ft426 -- “Pietas nationum est peccatum”, Munster, Mercerus; “studium nationum peccatum”, Cocceius.
- ft427 -- **bx[rbd]** “verbum vel sermo doloris”, Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis; vid. Gussetius, p. 177.
- ft428 -- **byj yh** “utitur bene”, Castalio; “pulchre”, Vatablus.
- ft429 -- **[yby]** “effutit, ebullit, fundit”, Vatablus; “eructat”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “ebullit”, V. L. Tigurine version, Schultens; “scaturire facit”, Michaelis.
- ft430 -- **j wpwx** “prospectantes velut a specula”, Michaelis; “speculatores”, Schultens; “speculantes”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “speculatur”, Cocceius.
- ft431 -- **aprm** “sanans”, so some in Vatablus.
- ft432 -- **ˆk al** “non erit rectum”, Pagninus, Baynus; “non est rectum”, Piscator, Mercerus.
- ft433 -- “Spargit quod abest a recto”, Junius & Tremellius, Amama; “eventilant non rectum”, Schultens, Cocceius.
- ft434 -- **[r rswm]** “fuit illi mala disciplina, vel castigatio”, Baynus.
- ft435 -- **l waç** “sepulchrum”, Munster, Piscator, Mercerus, so Ben Melech.
- ft436 -- **wl j kwh** “corripere”, Gejerus.
- ft437 -- **j mç bl** “cor gaudens”, V. L. Baynus.
- ft438 -- “Frangit fortia corda dolor”, Tibullus, l. 3. Eleg. 2. v. 6.

- ft439 -- Fernel. Method. Medendi, l. 7. c. 9. p. 54.
- ft440 -- **yn** “pauperis”, V. L. Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.
- ft441 -- **hmwhm** “tumultus”, Tigurine version, Montanus, Vatablus; “strepitus”, Mercerus.
- ft442 -- “Terror”, Aben Ezra.
- ft443 -- Capteivei, Act. 1. Sc. 2. v. 80. & 3. Sc. 1. v. 37.
- ft444 -- **tj ra** “viaticum”, Montanus, Amama; “commeatus”, Cocceius.
- ft445 -- Iliad. 7. v. 320, 321. Odys. 4. v. 65. & 8. v. 60. Vid. Suidam in voce **ομηρος**. Virgil. Aeneid. 8. v. 182.
- ft446 -- Aelian. l. 5. c. 14. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 45.
- ft447 -- Phoenomena, v. 132.
- ft448 -- **j yqcy** “faciet quiescere”, Pagninus, Montanus; “sedat”, Mercerus, Michaelis; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; “sedabit”, Schultens.
- ft449 -- **hl l s** “aggestum”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “eleveta”, Mercerus, Gejerus; “strata”, Montanus.
- ft450 -- **bl rsj l** “carenti corde”, Montanus; “ei qui deficitur”, Schultens.
- ft451 -- **tkl rçy** “diriget seipsum ambulando”, Montanus; “diriget ambulare, vel ad ambulandum”, Vatablus; “diriget viam suam ad ambulandum”, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft452 -- **dws ^yab** “in non secreto”, Montanus; “cum non sit secretum”, Baynus; “quum nullum est arcanum”, Schultens; “ubi non est secretum”, Cocceius.
- ft453 -- **[xb [xwb** “appetens concupiscentiam”, Montanus; “qui avaritiam inhiat” Tigurine version; “concupiscens concupiscentiam”, Vatablus.
- ft454 -- Kabvenaki.
- ft455 -- **hbwj h[wmç** “auditus bona”, Vatablus; “auditio bona”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft456 -- “Fama bona”, V. L. Tigurine version, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

- ft457 -- **rswm** “correctionem”, Pagninus, Vatablus; “qui abstrahit se a castigatione”, Piscator.
- ft458 -- **bl** “cor”, Pagninus, Piscator, Schultens, Michaelis.
- ft459 -- **bl ykr[m]** “dispositiones sive ordinationes”, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis; “instructiones adversae aciei in corde”, Schultens.
- ft460 -- **Æyç[m hwhy l a l g]** “devolve in Jehovam facta tua”, Junius & Tremellius; “negotia tua”, Piscator; “volve in Dominum quae tibi facieuda sunt”, Michaelis; “volve ad Jehovam opera tua”, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius; so Mercerus, Gejerus, Schultens, Tigurine version.
- ft461 -- **whn[ml]** “ad responsum suum”, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; “ad responsum proprium ejus”, Gussetius, p. 623. “ad responsum sui”, Schultens.
- ft462 -- **rpkv** “expiabitur”, Montanus, Vatablus; “expiatur”, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft463 -- **j pçm al b** “absque iudicio”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft464 -- **µsq** “divinatio”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft465 -- So Vatablus, Mercerus, Piscator.
- ft466 -- **ynba** “lapides”, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.
- ft467 -- **j wr hbg** “elitio spiritus”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; “altitudo spiritus”, Piscator; “celstudo aniimi”, Cocceius; “altifrons elatio spiritus”, Schultens.
- ft468 -- **wyl [b]** “domini sui”, Pagninus; “domino suo”, Mercerus, Gejerus; “dominorum suorum”, Michaelis.
- ft469 -- **l m[çpn]** “anima laborantis”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; “anima laboriosi”, Cocceius.
- ft470 -- “Ipse molestus molestiam affert sibi”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft471 -- **whyp wyl [Pka]** “incurvavit se ei os suum”, Pagninus; “incurvat se ei os suum”; Mercerus, Gejerus.

- ft472 -- “Inflexit se super eum os suum”, Montanus; “innititur super cum”, Vatablus.
- ft473 -- **l [yl b ɕya** “vir Belijahal”, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus.
- ft474 -- **twkpht ɕya** “vir perversitatum”, Montanus, Baynus, Schultens; “vir perversitatibus deditus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft475 -- **twkpht** “perversitates”, Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “res perversas”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “perversa”, Michaelis.
- ft476 -- Vid. A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 2. c. 15.
- ft477 -- Epist. l. 5. Ep. 4.
- ft478 -- **wj pɕm** “judicium ejus”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens; “judicium eorum”, Tigurine version.
- ft479 -- **tp** “frustrum”, a **ttp**, “fregit”, Gejerus.
- ft480 -- **hbrj** “siccum frustum panis”, Tigurine version; “cibi sicci” Junius & Tremellius; “brucella sicca”, V. L. Mercerus, Piscator; “bucea sicca”, Cocceius; “frustum sicci, sc. cibi”, Michaelis, “frustum siccae buccellae, Schultens, so Ben Melech.
- ft481 -- Ebr. Comment. p. 263.
- ft482 -- **ql j y** “dividet”, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; so Syriac version and the Targum; “partitur”, Junius & Tremellius; “partieur”, Piscator.
- ft483 -- **twh ʰwɕl l [** “perniciosae linguae”, Tigurine version; “linguae confractionum calamitatum, injuriarum”, Vatablus; “ad linguam exiliorum”, Michaelis.
- ft484 -- So Michaelis.
- ft485 -- **dyal** “ad calamitatem”, Schultens; “ob calamitatem”, Cocceius; “calamitate”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft486 -- In Lex. Talmud. col. 684.
- ft487 -- “Te felix natorum turba coronat”, Claudian. de Raptu Prosperp. l. 1. v. 109.
- ft488 -- Kabvenaki in Mercer. in loc.
- ft489 -- **rty tpɕ** “labium abundantiae”.

- ft490 -- **ˆj ˆba** “lapsis gratiae”, Montanus, Baynus, Michaelis.
- ft491 -- So Cocceius.
- ft492 -- **tj t** “descendet”, Montanus; “descendit”, Vatablus, Mercerus, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus.
- ft493 -- **ham l ysk twkhm** “magis quam si percuties stolidum centies”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, so Pagninus, Michaelis.
- ft494 -- **[r ˆcqby yrm Æa** “profecto rebellio quaeret malum”, Montanus; so Schultens, Piscator, Tigurine version, Cocceius.
- ft495 -- Comment, in Hos. xiii. 8. So Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 18.
- ft496 -- **ˆwrm tyˆar μym rj wp** “qui aperit aquam, vel aperiens aquas (est) principium contentionis”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft497 -- **[l gth ynpl** “antequam sese immisceat”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft498 -- Animadv. p. 931.
- ft499 -- Sophoclis Oedipus Tyrann. v. 622, 623.
- ft500 -- **dl wy hrxl j aw** “et fater diligit quando tribulatio nascitur”, Munster; so some in Vatablus.
- ft501 -- “Nihil homini amico est opportuno amicus”, Plauti Epidicus, Act. 3. Sc. 3. v. 43.
- ft502 -- Mechilta spud Galatin. Cathol. Ver. Arcan. l. 3. c. 28.
- ft503 -- **wnwˆl b Æphnw** “qui verterit se”, Pagninus; “et verteus se in lingua sua”, Montanus; “qui vertitur in lingua sua”. Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft504 -- **hhg bj yy j mˆ bl** “cor hilare bonam facit sanationem”, Michaelis.
- ft505 -- So R. Joseph Kimchi; “bonificat sive meliorem reddit medicinam”, some in Vatablus; “bene medicinam facit”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft506 -- **j qy [ˆr qyj m dj ˆ** “munus de sinu impii accipiet”, Baynus.
- ft507 -- **hmkj ˆybm ynp ta** “in facie prudentis (lucet) sapientia”, V. L. so Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Piscator, Noldius, p. 140. No. 665. “in vultu intelligentis sapientia”, Schultens

- ft508 -- רצוּי ל [מַּבְּיָדָן תְּכַחֵל “principes percuere ob rectitudinem”, Mercerus; “propter recta facta”, Piscator, Gataker.
- ft509 -- ת [ד [דְּוַי “qui scit scientiam”, Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus.
- ft510 -- וַיִּרְמָא אֶצְוַי “qui cohibet sermones suos”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft511 -- י וַר רָו “frigidus spiritu”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.
- ft512 -- י וַר רָו “pretiosus spiritu”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Baynus.
- ft513 -- So the Targum.
- ft514 -- [ל גְּתֵי הַצֹּחַת ל כַּב “immiscet se omni negotio”, Munster; “omnibus quae sunt immiscet se”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft515 -- “Et in omne solidum dentes destringei”, Schultens.
- ft516 -- וּבִל תְּוִל גְּתֵיב מֵא יֵך “sed in patefacere cor ejus”, Vatablus; “sed in detectione cordis sui”, Piscator; “sed sane ut enudet cor suum”, Schultens.
- ft517 -- הַרְיָן אֶוֹל ק מִ [“viro ignominioso, venit opprobriunu”, Pagninus; “cum ignominioso probrum”, Junis & Tremeilius; “cum probroso opprobrium”, Schultens, so Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft518 -- מִיִּמְהֵל תִּמְך “similia sunt verbis eorum, qui saepenumero contusi sunt”, Junius & Tremellius; “ut contusorum”, Cocceius.
- ft519 -- “Ut lenientia”, Montanus; “velut blanda”, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “quasi blandientia”, Schmidt, so Ben Melech.
- ft520 -- “Tanquam avide deglutita crustula”, Schultens.
- ft521 -- תַּיֵךְ צִמֵּל [בִּל “domino devaststionis”, Gejerus; “domino dissipanti”, Mercerus.
- ft522 -- Midrash Tillim in Psal. xviii. 50. fol. 18. 1.
- ft523 -- בְּגִצְנֵוּ “et exaltabitur”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus; “erit in loco alto et tuto”, Vatablus; “et exaltatur”, Michaelis; “in celsoque aget”, Schultens.
- ft524 -- Jermin its loc.

- ft525 -- **wtykçmb** “in imaginatione ejus”, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens; “in imagine sua”, Mercerus.
- ft526 -- **rbç ynpl** “ante confractionem”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft527 -- **haki** “percussus”, Pagninus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “perculsum”, Vatablus, Cocceius.
- ft528 -- “Contritum”, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; “fractum”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft529 -- **byj ry**.
- ft530 -- Opera & Dies, l. 2. v. 323.
- ft531 -- **μυνωνj t** “supplicationes”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.
- ft532 -- **μy[r çya** “vir amicorum”, Montanus, Vatablus, Baynus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; “vir sodalium”, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft533 -- Aristoph. Acharn. Act. 3. Sc. 2. v. 2. Pausan. Arcadica sive, l. 8. p. 506.
- ft534 -- **l ysk** “confidens divitiis”, Cocceii Lexic. col. 384.
- ft535 -- So Vatablus; or “without care of it”, Schultens.
- ft536 -- **Pysy**. “addit”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft537 -- Ovid.
- ft538 -- **wh[rm** “ab amico sua”, Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis; “a sodali sua”, Schultens.
- ft539 -- Theognis.
- ft540 -- **ˆtm çyal** “viro doni”, Montanus, Vatablus, Michaelis.
- ft541 -- **wh[rm** “amicus ejus”, Vatablus; “ominis amicus”, Cocceius; i.e. “quisque amicorum ejus”, Michaelis.
- ft542 -- **hmh al** “non sunt ii”, Junius & Tremillius; “et non sunt, Mercerus.
- ft543 -- “Nihil illa”, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft544 -- Vid. Amamae Antibarb. Bibl. l. 3. p. 742.

- ft545 -- **bl** “cor”, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Mercerus, etc.
- ft546 -- **twwh** “calamitates”, Vatablus; “aerumnae”, Piscator, Michaelis; “causa aerumnarum”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft547 -- A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 1. c. 17.
- ft548 -- **rmç** “observat”.
- ft549 -- **wtymh l a** “ad interficiendum cum”, Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “ad occidendum sum”, Piscator, Cocceius, Tigurine version, Michaelis, Schultens, Gussetius, p. 534.
- ft550 -- **tj l xb** “in patinam”, Tigurine version; “in lebeta”, Mercerus, Michaelis; “in patinia”, Cocceius; “in paropsidem”, Schultens.
- ft551 -- Ebr. Comment. p. 715.
- ft552 -- **µr[y** “astutus efficitur”, Pagninus, Montanus; “astutus fiet”, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius; “astutior fiet”, Michaelis; “solertiam parabit”, Schultens.
- ft553 -- So Gejerus, Schultens.
- ft554 -- **l [yl b d[** “testis Belijahal”, Montanus, Tigurine version, Baynus.
- ft555 -- **wçpn aj wj** .
- ft556 -- **wdsj** “misericordiam suam”, Pagninus, so some in Vatablus; “unius cujusque misericordiam”, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft557 -- Theoerit. Idyll. 27. v. 32.
- ft558 -- So Montanus, Schulteus.
- ft559 -- **rknty** “ignotus erit”, i.e. “non facile cognoscitur”, Vatablus; so R. Joseph Kimchi; “simulat se alium esse”, Gussetius, p. 413. “dissimulatorem agit”, Schultens.
- ft560 -- **twbçj m** “cogitationes”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Gejerus; “unaquaque cogitationum”, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis.
- ft561 -- **br[tt al** “non miscebis te”, Pagninus, Montanus; “ne misceas te”, Baynus, Mercerus; “ne admisceto te”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “ne commiscearis”, Michaelis; “ne admisceas te”, Schultens.

- ft562 -- **Æçj ʿwçyab** “in obscuritate tenebrarum”, Pagninus, Mercerus; “in nigredine tenebrarum”, Michaelis.
- ft563 -- Animadv. ad V. T. p. 248.
- ft564 -- **hrzm** “ventilat”, Junius & Tremellius, Schultens.
- ft565 -- Vid. Schindler. Lexic. col. 109. & Weemse’s Christ. Synagog. l. 1. c. 6. s. 8. p. 187.
- ft566 -- **tmaw dsj** “gratis et veritas”, Cocceius.
- ft567 -- **qyrmt** “abstesio”, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius; “detersio”, Montanus, Michaelis; “effricatio”, Schultens.
- ft568 -- **[rb** “in malo, sub, homine”, Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; “in malo (homine nequam)”, Schultens, so Aben Ezra.
- ft569 -- Valer. Maximus, l. 8. c. 15. s. 12. Vid. Ovid. Fasti, l. 4. v. 158.
- ft570 -- **bl bj rw μyny[μwr** “elatio oculorum et latitudo cordis”, Piscator, Michaelis, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft571 -- “Prima Ceres ferro mortales vertere terram instituit”, Virgil. Georgic. l. 1.
- ft572 -- **μy[çr rn** “Incerna impiorum”, V. L. Mercerus, Gejerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft573 -- **μrwgy** “dissecabit eos”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “serrabit eos”, Aben Ezra & Kimchi in Mercer. Michaelis; “gravem ipsis uterum trahit”, Schultens.
- ft574 -- **rzw** “et alieni”, Pagninus, Montanus; “et extranei”, Vatablus; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech.
- ft575 -- **rbj tybw** “domo societatis”, Montanus, Vatablus, Baynus, Mercerus, Michaelis, “et domus societatis”, Schultens.
- ft576 -- **μynwdm tçam** “prae muliere contentionum”, Montanus, Schultens.
- ft577 -- So Munster, and some in Mercer.
- ft578 -- **hpky** “deprimit”, Piscator; so some in Mercerus; “subigit”, Cocceius; “pensat nasum”, Schultens.
- ft579 -- “Munera (crede mihi) placant hominesque deosque”, Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 3.

- ft580 -- **htj m** “pavor”, V. L. “horror”, Tigurine version; “terror”, Vatablus, Mercerus; “consternatio”, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft581 -- See Mede’s Discourse 7. p. 32.
- ft582 -- **hj mç** “laetitia”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft583 -- **rpwk**.
- ft584 -- **rbdm** “a” **rbd** “loqui”.
- ft585 -- **hwn** “tuguirolum”, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft586 -- **dsj** “gratiam”, Cocceius.
- ft587 -- Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 34. p. 47.
- ft588 -- **hmzb** “solertem”, Deuteronomy Dieu.
- ft589 -- **µybzkd** [**d**] “testis mendaciorum”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft590 -- **wynpb** **z** [**h**] “roborat vultu suo”, Baynus; “in faciebus suis”, Montanus.
- ft591 -- **wykrd** **τα οδους αυτου**, Sept. “vias suas”, Baynus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft592 -- **hwhy dgnl** “in conspectu Jehovae”, Gejerus; “coram Domino”, Gussetius, p. 495.
- ft593 -- **h** [**wçth**] **hwhy** “a Domino autem (datur) salus”. Tigurine version; “Domino est salvatio”, Cocceius; “Jehovae est salus”, Schultens; so Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft594 -- **bwj** **ˆj** “gratia melior”, Munster, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Michaelis; so Schultens.
- ft595 -- “Victor cum victis pariter miscebitur umbris--Lydus Delichio, non ditat Croesus ab Iro”, Propert. 1. 3. Eleg. 5. v. 15, 17.
- ft596 -- **hwhy tary hwn** [**bq**] “praemium mansuetudinis, quae est reverentia Jehovae”, Schultens; “merces humilitatis timor Domini”, Baynus; “praemium humilitatis est timor Domini”: Tigurine version; so Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius.

- ft597 -- **wkrd yp l** [“super os viae suae”, Montanus; “ad os viae ejus”, Schultens.
- ft598 -- “Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem testa diu”, Horat. l. 1. Ep. 2. v. 69.
- ft599 -- So, “serere fallaciam”, in Plauti Poenulo, l. 1. v. 67.
- ft600 -- **ˆwa** “inanitatem ac nihilum”, Michaelis.
- ft601 -- “Et virga in eum desaevitura, erit decretoria”.
- ft602 -- **ˆy[bwj** “bonus oculus”, Montanus, Vatablus, Cocceius; “bonus oculo”, Junilus & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft603 -- **wytpç ˆj** “gratia sunt labia ejus”, Deuteronomy Dieu, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; “cujus labia sunt grata”, i.e. “gratiosa”, Mercerus; “gratia in labiis ejus est”, some in Vatablus.
- ft604 -- **Ænj bb** “in ventre tuo”, V. L. Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft605 -- **wnwk** “disponantur”, Vatablus.
- ft606 -- **μyçl ç** “terna”, Montanus, Vatablus, so Jarchi.
- ft607 -- **τpιαpωç**, Sept. “tripticiter”, V. L. and Arabic version; “tribus vicibus”, Baynus, Targum and Syriac version; “triplici filo et nexa”, Schultens; “triplicata”, Cocceius.
- ft608 -- **byçhl** .
- ft609 -- **Æyj l çl** “qui miserunt te”, V. L. “mittentibus te”, Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis, so Aben Ezra; “missoribus tui”, Schultens.
- ft610 -- **awj l d yk** “nam tenuis est”, so some in Mercerus.
- ft611 -- “Etsi”; so some in Mercerus; “quamvis”, Lutherus.
- ft612 -- **yn[** “inopem”, Schultens, so Cocceius; “pauperem”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft613 -- **çpn mhy[bq ta [bqw** “et vim faciet illis, qui animae eorum vim intulerunt”, Munster, Vatablus; “et spoliabit eos qui spotiant ipsos anima”, Michaelis.

- ft614 -- **b** “inter”, Pagninus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft615 -- **μl w[l wbg** “terminum antiquum”, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft616 -- **μyκc̣j ynpl** “ante obscuros”, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “coram obscuris”, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; “in conspectu obscurorum”, Schultens.
- ft617 -- Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 104. 2.
- ft618 -- **˘ybt ˘yb** “considerando considera”, Pagninus, Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft619 -- **çpn l [b** “dominus animae”, Vatablus, Mercerus, Michaelis.
- ft620 -- **watt l a** “ne concupiscas”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens; “ne coucupiscito”, Piscator.
- ft621 -- **μybẓk μj l** “panis mendaciorum”, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; “cibus mendaciorum”, Piscator, Schultens.
- ft622 -- **[gyt l a** “ne fatiges”, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius; “ne hiascas”, Schultens.
- ft623 -- **Py[th** “numquid involare facies”, Michaelis; “ut involent”, Junius & Tremellius; “ut volent”, Piscator; “ad sineves volare”, Cocceius.
- ft624 -- **hç[y hç[yk** “quis faciendo faciet”, Montanus, Baynus.
- ft625 -- **haybh** “adduc”, Piscator; “vel fac ingredi”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus; “adduc et quasi praesens siste”, Michaelis,
- ft626 -- **anqy l a** “ne aemuletur”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius et Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft627 -- “Aemulare virum timentem, Jehovam”, Vatablus.
- ft628 -- **tyrj a** “merces”, Pagninnus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus; so Ben Melech.
- ft629 -- **Ætwqt** “spes tua”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

- ft630 -- **l wgy l wg** “exultando exultabit”, Paguinus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis; “gaudendo gaudebit”, Cocceias.
- ft631 -- **j mçy** “guadeat”, V. L. “laetetur”, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “fac ut laetetur”, Mercerus, Gejerus; “exhilaretur”, Schultens.
- ft632 -- **hnxrt** “currant”, Mercerus; “currere edomentur”, Schultens.
- ft633 -- Truculaetus, Act. 2. Sc. 7. v. 16, 17. “Lucuculetum coenum”, Bacchides, Act. 3. Sc. 1. v. 11. “Lutea meretrix”, Trucul. Act. 4. Sc. 4. v. 11.
- ft634 -- Sydonius Apollinar. 1. 9. Ep. 6.
- ft635 -- **rab** “putens”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft636 -- **Ptj k** “tanquam vir praedae”, Vatablus; “ut praedator”, Mercerus, Gejerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “ut raptor”, Cocceius; “velut praedo”, Michaelis; “ut harpago”, Schultens.
- ft637 -- **pydgwb** “perfidus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens.
- ft638 -- **Pyswt** “adjungitque sibi”, Tigurine version.
- ft639 -- **ywba yml** “cui egestas”, Montanus, Amama; “cuinam penuria”, Vatablus.
- ft640 -- **j yç** “loquacitas”, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus; so the Targum.
- ft641 -- Sueton. Vita ejus, c. 17.
- ft642 -- **Æsmm** “calicibus epotandi”, V. L.
- ft643 -- **yk** “quia”, some in Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft644 -- **wny[** “oculum suum”, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft645 -- **sykb** “in crumena, vel marsupio”, Mercerus.
- ft646 -- **çrpy** “jecur diffindet”, Schultens.
- ft647 -- “Vina parant animos Veneri”, Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 1.
- ft648 -- **ytyl j l b** “non dolui”, Tigurine version, Michaelis.

- ft649 -- Schultens Orig. Heb. l. 1. c. 9. s. 20.
- ft650 -- **ynwml h** “contuderunt me, velut malleis”, Michaelis; so Grotius.
- ft651 -- **yt [dy l b** “non cognovi”, Pagninus, Montanus; “non novi”, Cocceius.
- ft652 -- **h[r yçnab** “viros mali”, Baynus, Michaelis.
- ft653 -- **zw[b** “in fortitudine”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “in robore”, Michaelis.
- ft654 -- **twmzm l [b** “patronum malarum cogitationum”, Montanus; “dominum”, Mercerus, Gejerus; “auctorem”, Michaelis.
- ft655 -- “Nam scelus intra se tacitum qui cogitat ullum, facti crimen habet”, Juvenal. Satyr. 13. v. 209, 210.
- ft656 -- **tl wa** “stulti”, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Piscator, Gejerus.
- ft657 -- **typrth** “si remiseras”, Tigurine version; “remissus fuisti”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “si remisisse te geras”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Michaelis.
- ft658 -- **twml µyj ql** “captos ad mortem”, Montanus. Piscator, Schultens.
- ft659 -- **grhl myj m** “inclinantes ad necem”, Mercerus; “nutantes ad occasionem”, Montanus, Coeccius; “nutantes ad lanienam”, Schultens.
- ft660 -- **hz wn[dy al** , **ουκ οιδα τουτον**, Sept. “non noverimus istum”, Gejerus; “non novimus hunc”, Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis.
- ft661 -- **Æçpn rxnw** “et qui observat animam tuam”, Michaelis, Schultens; “observator animae tuae”, Tigurine version, Gejerus.
- ft662 -- Athenaei Deipnosophist. l. 2. c. 7. p. 46, 47. so Pierius Valerian. apud Steeb. Coelum Sephirot Heb. c. 7. s. 5. p. 132.
- ft663 -- Vid. Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 30. p. 37.
- ft664 -- **Ætwqt** “spes tua”, Mercerus.
- ft665 -- **hwml** “habituaculo”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus; “habitationi”, Michaelis; “mansioni”, Cocceius, Schultens.

- ft666 -- h[rb “in malum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft667 -- tyrj a “finis”, Pagninus, Vatablus, Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft668 -- br[tt l a “ne misceas te”, Pagninus, Montanus; “ne commisceto te”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, so Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft669 -- μυνωϚ μ[“cum iterantibus”, Pagninus, Montanus; “sub iniquitates suas”; so some in Vatablus, Baynus.
- ft670 -- μυmkj l hl a μg “haec quoque sapientum sunt”, Tigurine version; “etiam haec sapientibus profecta sunt”, Piscator; “etiam haecce sapientum”, Cocceius, Schultens, so Grotius.
- ft671 -- bwj tkrb “benedictio boni”, Baynus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens; “benefactio cujusque boni”: Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft672 -- Æytpϙb tytyphw “et ne atteras labiis tuis”, Vatablus; “et ne comminuas eum labiis tuis”, Syriac version.
- ft673 -- μυνωϚmq “chamaeleones”, Junius & Tremellius; “cardui”, Piscator, Cocceius; “carduis”, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft674 -- ybl tyϙa ykna hzj aw “quum ergo contemplatus essem, adjunxi animum meum”, Mercerus; “cum intuerer, apposui cor meum”, Gejerus; “cum igitur viderem ego, adponebam cor meum”, Michaelis.
- ft675 -- rdhtt l a “ne tibi assumes honorem”, Cocceius; “ne honores teipsum”, Michaelis; “ne magnificum te facias”, Schultens; “ne magnifices te”, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft676 -- rj a dws “secretum alterius”, Pagninus, Montanus; “arcanum alterius”, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Michaelis, Schultens, so Cocceius, Gejerus; “arcanum aliud”, Munster; “alienum”, Syriac version.
- ft677 -- Ædsj y “probris afficiat te”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “probros afficiet te”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.
- ft678 -- wynpa l [“super rotis suis”, Montanus, Piscator, so Kimchi and Ben Melech; “super rotationibus suis”. Schultens.

- ft679 -- **twykçmb** “in thecis transparentibus”, Montanus; “cancellis”, Baynus; “cancellaturis, sive retiaculis”, Glassius; “in speciosis calicibus”, Cocceius.
- ft680 -- Praefat. Moreh Nevochim.
- ft681 -- **µkj j ykw** “qui arguit sapientem”, V. L. Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft682 -- **gl ç tnk** “sicut scutum ex nive”, some in Gejerus, so Aben Ezra; “sicut tectio nivis”, Michaelis.
- ft683 -- Comment. Ebr. p. 718.
- ft684 -- **byçy** “restituit”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “faciet requiescere”, Pagninus, Baynus.
- ft685 -- Moreh. Nevochim, par. 1. c. 32, p. 41.
- ft686 -- **rj** “rarum fac”, Montanus, Vatablus, Gejerus, Michaelis, Cocceius; Heb. “praetiosum fac”, Piscator.
- ft687 -- **Æ[bçy ^p** “ne forte satictur tui”, Schultens; so Montanus; “saturatus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft688 -- **dgwb j j bm** “fiducia praevaricatoris”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “fiducia perfidi”, Cocceius, Michaelis.
- ft689 -- Geograph. 1. 17. p. 552.
- ft690 -- Isidor. Origin. 1. 16. c. 2.
- ft691 -- Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 530.
- ft692 -- Ibid. p. 532. Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. p. 1009, 1010.
- ft693 -- Meteorolog. 1. 4. c. 6.
- ft694 -- **dg b hd[m** “ornans vestem suam”, Gussetins, p. 880. “ornata veste instruens”; Schultens.
- ft695 -- Dionysii Perieg. v. 532.
- ft696 -- **l l wj t** “parturiet”, Montanus; “gignit”, Junius & Tremellius; “parturit”, Schultens.
- ft697 -- Aristot. Metaphysic. 1. 2.
- ft698 -- Iliad. 19. v. 358. Odys. 5. v. 295.

- ft699 -- Georgic. l. 1. prope finem.
- ft700 -- “Ventorum frigidissimi quos a septentrione diximus spirare, et reliquos compescunt, et nubes abigunt”, Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 47.
- ft701 -- “Perfundit gelida”, Horat. Sermon. l. 2. Sat. 7. v. 91.
- ft702 -- **hpy** [“lassa”, Montanus; “lasso”, Tigurine version, so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.
- ft703 -- Suidas in voce **μουλι**.
- ft704 -- “Vitiosum est ubique quod nimium est”, Seneca de Tranquillitate, c. 9.
- ft705 -- **dwbk μdbk r qj** “investigatio gloriae illorum (est) gloria”, Pagninus, Montanus, Michaelis; “scrutatio gloriae ipsorum est gloria”, Cocceius.
- ft706 -- **rwp xk** “sicut passeris”, Mercerus, Gejerus; “ut passer”, Piscator; Schultens.
- ft707 -- Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 8.
- ft708 -- Vid. Strabo. Geograph. l. 14. p. 458. Dionys. Perieg. v. 506, 507.
- ft709 -- **wl** “in quempiam”, V. L.
- ft710 -- **hspm μyqwc wyl d** “elevatio crurum a claudio facta”, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft711 -- “Femora claudi imitantur situlas”, Gussetius, p. 188. “situlas agunt crura ex claudio”, Schultens; “instar binarum sitularum in puteo alternatium adscendentium ac descendendum”, Gejerus.
- ft712 -- Ebr. Comment. p. 777.
- ft713 -- D. Herbert de Chefbury d. Relig Gent. c. 7. p. 58.
- ft714 -- Suidas in voce **ερμαιον**.
- ft715 -- Phurnutus de Natura Deorum, p. 33.
- ft716 -- Vid. D. Herbert de Cherbury, ut supra, p. 59.
- ft717 -- Cornel. Nepot. Vit. Alcibiad. l. 7. c. 3.
- ft718 -- Pausan. Corinth. sive, l. 2. p. 157.
- ft719 -- Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. s. 6. & Maimon. in ib.

ft720 -- Ebr. Comment. p. 244.

ft721 -- So Mercerus, Piscator.

ft722 -- Smegm. Oriental. l. 1. c. 2. p. 171.

ft723 -- **hnwç** “qui iterat”, Tigurine version, Michaelis; “iterans”, Montanus, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus; “duplicans”, Schultens.

ft724 -- **wyny[b** “in oculis suis”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, etc.

ft725 -- **tj l xb** “in patina vel olla”, Vatablus; “in patinam”, Tigurine version; “lebetes”, Mercerus; “in paropside”, Cocceius; “in paropsidem”, Schultens.

ft726 -- **hal n** “fatigatur”, Mercerus, Gejerus; “defessus fit”, Michaelis; “defetiscitur”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens.

ft727 -- **hl hl tmk** “ut se habet qui iusanum ne simulat”, Piscator; “ut qui se insanire fingit”, Cocceius.

ft728 -- “Sicut abscondit se”, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus.

ft729 -- “Ut sese fatigat”, Tigurine version.

ft730 -- **µyx[spab** “deficientibus lignis”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “in deficientia lignorum”, Michaelis; “quum expirarunt ligna”, Schultens.

ft731 -- **qtçy** “silebit”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “silet”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “consilescit”, Cocceius, Schultens.

ft732 -- **µynwdm çya** “vir contentionum”, Montanus, Baynus, Piscator, Gejerus.

ft733 -- **rknÿ** “agnoscetur”, Montanus, Vatablus; “cognoscetur”, Tigurine version; “cognoscitur”, Amama, so Luther.

ft734 -- **w** “quamvis”, Luther. apud Gejerus, Baynus.

ft735 -- **ˆwaçmb** “in desolatione”, Montanus; “in solitudine”, Baynus, Vatablus; “in vastatione”, Tigurine version; “in vastitate”, Mercerus, Piscator, so Ben Melech.

ft736 -- “Aut petis aut urges ruitum, Sisyphæ, saxum”, Ovid. Metamorph. l. 4. v. 460.

ft737 -- **wykd** “contritos suos”, Montanus, Michaelis.

ft738 -- “Percutientes”, Gejerus.

ft739 -- “Linguam falsitatis odit quisque contritorum ejus”, Cocceius Lexic. col. 158. “quisque contritorum ab ea”, *ibid.* version.

ft740 -- **hj dm** “expulsionem”, Pagninus, Montanus; “impulsum sive lapsum”, Vatablus; “impulsionem”, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.

ft741 -- **rj m μwyb** “in die crastino”, Pagninus, Montanus.

ft742 -- Sophoclis Oedipus Colon. v. 560. “Nemo tam divos habuit faventes, erastinum ut possit sibi polliceri”, Senco. Thyest. v. 617, 618.

ft743 -- “Quid sit futurum eras, fuge quaerere”, Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 9.

ft744 -- **Pj ç** “inundatio”, Michaelis, so Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, “exundatio”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “inundatio salcans”, Schultens.

ft745 -- **twrt [n** “deprecanda”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Amama.

ft746 -- Ad Nicoclem, p. 38.

ft747 -- **swbt** “calcabit”, Pagninus, Montanus; “caleat”, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus; “conculcat”, Cocceius; “proculcat”, Michaelis, Schultens.

ft748 -- “Jejunus stomachus raro vulgaria temnit”, Horat. Sermon. l. 2. Sat. 2.

ft749 -- Epist. 123.

ft750 -- **çpn tx[m** “a consilio animae”, Montanus; “propter consilium animae”, Pagninus, Gejerus, Michaelis.

ft751 -- “Magis quam consilium animae, sub. propriae”, Vatablus, Baynus; “quam consilium proprium”, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Amama.

ft752 -- “Tempora si fuerunt nubila, solus eris”, Ovid. Trist. 1. Eleg. 8.

ft753 -- **har** “videns”, V. L. Tigurine version, Piscator; “vidit”, Pagninus, Montanus; “videt”, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Schultens.

ft754 -- David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 107. 3.

- ft755 -- **arqy** “clamabit”, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Mercerus; “vocabit”, Baynus; “clamat”, Piscator, Michaelis; “praeconem agit”, Schultens.
- ft756 -- **dj y** “laetatur”, a **hdj** “laetari; ferrum in ferro laetatur, et virum laetificant ora socii ejus”, Gussetius, p. 242. “ferrum ferro hiluratur, et vir exhilarat vultum sodalis sui”, Schultens.
- ft757 -- **rmç** “qui custodit”, Pagninus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “custodiens”, Montanus; “qui custos est domini sui”, V. L.
- ft758 -- “Observat”, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis; “observans”, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft759 -- Nat. Quaest. 1. 1. c. 6.
- ft760 -- Juvenal. Satyr. 2. v. 8.
- ft761 -- Plauti Trinum, Act. 2. Sc. 2. v. 14.
- ft762 -- **wl l hm ypl** “ad os laudis suae”, Gejerus.
- ft763 -- Laert. in Vit. Anaxarch. 1. 9. p. 668.
- ft764 -- **Ænax ynp** “faciem pecoris tui”, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens; “vultum”, V. L. Pagninus; “facies”, Montanus.
- ft765 -- **Æbl j yç** “pone cor tuum”, Pagninus, Montanus; “adverte cor”, Cocceius; “adverte animum tuum”, Michaelis; “apponere cor tuum”, Schultens.
- ft766 -- Vid. Martin. Hist. Sinica, p. 92, 93, 326.
- ft767 -- **hl g** “migrat”, Cocceius; “cum migraverit”, Michaelis.
- ft768 -- Plin. Nat. Hist. 1. 28. c. 9. Vid. Scheuehzer. Physic, Sacr. vol. 5. p. 1016.
- ft769 -- **μyyj w** “vitas”, Montanus; “ad vitam”, Gejerus; “life” is often put for “bread”; or for that by which life is maintained, both in Greek and Latin writers; so **βίος**, in Hesiod. Opera, 1. 1. v. 31, 328. and “vita”, in Plaut. Stichus, Act. 3. Sc. 2. v. 9. Trinum, Act. 2. Sc. 4. v. 76.
- ft770 -- Deipnosoph. 1. 14. c. 22. p. 658. see also 1. 1. c. 8. p 10.
- ft771 -- Isthm. 4. antistroph. 3. col. 1. v. 5.

- ft772 -- **j j by** “confiduat”, Mercerus, Gejerus, Trigurine version; “confidet, vel confidere solet”, Baynus; “confidit”, Michaelis.
- ft773 -- **[r yçna** “viri mali, (in genitivo casu)”, Mercerus; “vel malitiae”, Baynus, Gejerus.
- ft774 -- **pykrd** Heb. “duabus viis”, Piscator, Cocceius; “pervertens duas vias”, Baynus; “duplici via”, Michaelis; “gemina via”, Schultens, so Ben Melech.
- ft775 -- **h[r** “qui pascit”, V. L. Pagninus, Piscator, Gejerus, Schultens; “pascitar”, Michaelis; “pascens”, Montanus.
- ft776 -- Politic. l. 1. c. 10.
- ft777 -- A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 16. c. 12.
- ft778 -- Plauti Pseudolos, Act. 4. Sc. 7. v. 23, 24. “Habet argentum jam admordere hunc mihi lubet”, Lucan. l. 1. v. 131. “Vorax usura.”
- ft779 -- **bwj wl j ny** “haereditate accipient bonum”, Pagninus, Montanus; “haereditabunt bonum”, Michaelis; so Mercerus, Cocceius; “haereditatem cernent ubertatem boni”, Schultens.
- ft780 -- **çpj y** “investigabitur”, Pagninus, Montanus; “exploratur”, Tigurine version; “explorabitur”, Baynus; “pervestigatur”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis.
- ft781 -- **h[rb** “in malum”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Schultens.
- ft782 -- **qqwç** “avidus”, Pagninus, Montanus; “famelicus”, Castalio, Schultens; “esuriens”, V. L. Vatablus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Bochart; “adpetens”, Michaelis.
- ft783 -- “Leo fremit”, Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16. “Spumat aper, fluit unda, fremit leo, sibilat anguis”; Licentius de Protheo.
- ft784 -- “Nec vespertinus circumgemit ursus ovile”, Epod. Ode 16. v. 51.
- ft785 -- **twqç[m br** “multus oppressionibus”, Montanus, Junius & Tremeilius, Piscator, Mercerus, Baynus, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft786 -- So Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gejerus, and some Jewish writers in Vatablus.

- ft787 -- **µdb qç** [“pressus propter sanguinem animae”, Amama, Cartwright; so R. Joseph Kimchi in D. Kimchii Sepher Shorash rad. **qç**].
- ft788 -- [**çwy** “erit salvus”, Pagninus, Montanus, V. L. Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus.
- ft789 -- **µj l [bçy** “saturabitur pane”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus, Schultens.
- ft790 -- [**bçy** “satiabitur”, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis; “saturabitur”, Pagninus, Montanus, Gejerus, Schultens.
- ft791 -- **twnwma çya** “vir fidelitatum”, Vatablus, Merceras, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis.
- ft792 -- **twkrb br** “multus benedictionibus”, Montanus, Vatablus, Baynus, Michaeiis.
- ft793 -- “Vir veritatum”, Montanus.
- ft794 -- Satyr. 14. v. 178.
- ft795 -- “Nam dives qui fieri vult, et cito vult fieri”, Juvenal. Satyr. 14. v. 176.
- ft796 -- “Sed quae reverentia legum? quis metus, ant pudor est unquam properantis avari?” Juvenal, ib.
- ft797 -- **yrj a** “post me”, Montanus, Tigurine version, Baynus; so some in Vatablus and Michaelis, R. Saadiah Gaon; “ut sequatur me”, Junius & Tremellius.
- ft798 -- **çpn bj r** “latus animo”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version; “amplus animo suo”: Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “latus anima”, Mercerus, Cocceius.
- ft799 -- **twj kwt çya** “vir increpationum”, Vatablus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “vir correptionum”, Piscator, Michaelis; “vir redargutionum”, Schultens.
- ft800 -- **rbçy** “conteretur”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, etc. “confringetur”, Schultens; so Baynus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.

- ft801** -- **aprm `yaw** “et non (erit) sanitas”, Pagninus, Montanus, Baynus; “non sit curatio”, Junius & Tremellius; “medicina”, Piscator.
- ft802** -- **twbrb** “cum augentur”, Junius & Tremellius; “cum multiplicati fuerit, vel multiplicantur”, Vatablus, Baynus, Cocceius, Michaelis; “in multiplicari justos”, Montanus.
- ft803** -- **j nay** “gemet”, Pagninus, Montanus, V. L. “gemit”, Michaelis; “ingemiscit”, Schultens; so the Tugurine version, Mercerus; “suspirat”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.
- ft804** -- **h[r** “nutrit”, V. L. “pascit”, Pagninus, Piscator, Gejerus, Schultens; “pascitur”, Michaelis; “pascens”, Montanus, Mercerus.
- ft805** -- **twmwrj cya** “vir oblationam”, Montanus, Baynus, Grotius, Gejerus, Schultens.
- ft806** -- “Vir exactionum”, Mercerus; “qui levat exactiones”, Munster; “qui tributa imponit”, so some in Vatablus; “qui tribbuta extorquet”, Tigurine version.
- ft807** -- **µyl d `yd qydx [dy** “novit justus causan pauperum”, V. L. “cognoscit”, Pagninus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, etc. “novit et curat justus judicum pauperum”, Michaelis; “cognoscit justus litem tenuiem”, Schultens.
- ft808** -- **t[d `yby al** “non intelliget scientiam”, Pagninus, Montanus; “intelligit”, Mercerus, Piscator, Gejerus, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft809** -- “Inflamant urbem”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft810** -- **hyrq wj ypy** “suffiant, vel periflant civitatem”, Gejerus; “diffiant civitatem”, Gussetius, p. 667. “exsuffiant civitatem”, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft811** -- **µybk t cya** “vir usurarum”, Mercerus; “foenerator”, Piscator, Tigurine version; “usurarius”, Munster.
- ft812** -- **twbrb** “dominantibus impiis”; some in Mercerus; “quum praesunt impii”, Tigurine version.
- ft813** -- **[rpy** “feriabitur”, Montanus.
- ft814** -- “Rebellis erit”, Pagninus; “retroagitur”, Mercerus; “defecit, recedit”, Vatablus; “refractarius”, Gejerus.

- ft815 -- “Nadatur”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Michaelis; “denudatur”, Cocceius; “cessabit et otiosus erit, deficiet et retrocedit atque denudatur”, Baynus.
- ft816 -- **hrwt rmc** “qui observat legem”, i. e. “verbum Dei”, Cocceius; “doctrinam”, Amama.
- ft817 -- **wyrbdb 𐤀** “praecipitem in negotiis suis”, Vatablus, Piscator; “in rebus suis”, Mercerus.
- ft818 -- **hmj l [b** “dominus furoris”, so Vatablus, Piscator, Michaelis.
- ft819 -- **Æwbk 𐤀mtj** “assequetur gloriam”, Montanus; “potietur gloria”, Vatablus.
- ft820 -- “Tenebit honorem”, Piscator; “tenebit gloriam”, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis; “apprehendit gloriam”, Shultens.
- ft821 -- **dygy al w** “et non indicat”, Junius & Tremellius, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schultens, Michaelis.
- ft822 -- So Gejerus.
- ft823 -- **bgçy** “sublevabitur”, V. L. “elevabitur”, Pagninus, Montanus; “exaltabitur”, Vatablus; “in edito collocatur”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “sublimabitur”, Cocceius, Michaelis; “celsa in arce locabitur”, Schultens, so Ben Melech.
- ft824 -- **ynp** “faciem”, V. L. Pagninus, Vatablus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, so Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft825 -- Deuteronomy Dieu, Cocceius, Teelman. Specimen. Explicat. Parabol. p. 378.
- ft826 -- Jelammedenu apud Buxtorf. Lex. Rab. col. 26.
- ft827 -- Onomastic. Sacr. p. 39.
- ft828 -- **açmh** “onus”, Mercerus; “prophetia gravis”, Tigurine version.
- ft829 -- Jermin in loc.
- ft830 -- See Trapp in loc.
- ft831 -- So Junius & Tremellius, Amama, Calovius, Cartwright.
- ft832 -- Vid. Teelman. Specimen. Explicat. Parabol. p. 391.
- ft833 -- Deuteronomy Leg. l. 10. p. 959.

- ft834 -- **çyam ykna r [b** “bardus sum prae viro”, Mercerus; “brutus ego prae viro”, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft835 -- “Nam brutus sum ex quo vir sum”, Junius & Tremellius, so Cartwright.
- ft836 -- “Nec est mihi intelligentia Adami”, Cartwright.
- ft837 -- **yk** “nam”, Junius & Tremellius; “quia”, Pagninus, Montanus; “quoniam”, Michaelis.
- ft838 -- **μyçdq** “sanctorum”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Gejerus, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft839 -- **[da μyçdq t [dw** “ad cognitionem sanctorum novi”, Michaelis; “expers sum humanarum artium, et divinarum guarus sum”, Vatablus in Gejerus.
- ft840 -- Teelman. Specimen. Explicat. Parabol. p. 391.
- ft841 -- **κεινον γαρ ταμην ανεμων**, etc. Homer. Odyss. 10. v. 21, 22. “Aeole, namque tibi divum pater atque hominum rex, et mulcere dedit fluctus, et tollere vento”, Virgil Aeneid. 1. v. 69, 70.
- ft842 -- See a Sermon of mine, called “Christ the Saviour from the Tempest”, p. 17, 18.
- ft843 -- **[dt yk** “ad nosti?” Noldius, p. 393. No. 1337.
- ft844 -- **hpwr x** “purgatus”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Gejerus; “purgatissimus”, Junius & Tremellius; Heb. “conflatus”, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft845 -- **Ætam ytl aç** “postulavi a te”, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Gejerus; “peto ab te”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “petii a te”, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft846 -- Camin. 1. 2. Ode 10. v. 5.
- ft847 -- Sententiae, v. 1151, 1152.
- ft848 -- “Nunquam divitias deos rogavi, contentus modicis, meoque laetus; paupertas, veniam dabis, recede”, Epigr. 1. 4. Ep. 65.
- ft849 -- **yqj μj l** “panem statuti mei”, Montanus; “demensi mei”, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Michaelis, Schultens.

- ft850 -- Vid. Juvenal. Sat. 14. v. 126. & Not. in ibid.
- ft851 -- **ḥl t l a** “ne crimineris lingua”, Montanus.
- ft852 -- **tmḥaw** “et delinquas”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Gejerus; “q. d. peccabis”, Vatablus.
- ft853 -- Nat. Hist. 1. 11. c. 37.
- ft854 -- Satyr. 6. v. 168.
- ft855 -- **hqwl [l** “sanguisugae”, V. L. Pagninus, Tigurine version. Mercerus, Gejerus.
- ft856 -- Nat. Hist. 1. 8. c. 10.
- ft857 -- “Non missura cutem nisi plena cruoris hirudo”, Horat. de Arte Poet. fine.
- ft858 -- Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 5. c. 19. col. 801.
- ft859 -- Concord. Ebr. Par. p. 467. No. 1425.
- ft860 -- In voce **βδελλα**.
- ft861 -- Thalia sive, l. 3. c. 16.
- ft862 -- **ma thqyl** “obediantiam matris”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Michaelis; “doctrinam”, Vatablus, Tigurine version; “disciplinam”, Castalio; “obsequium matris”, Schultens.
- ft863 -- Lexic. col. 1960.
- ft864 -- “Non pascas in cruce corvos”, Horat. Ep. 16. ad Quinctium, v. 48.
- ft865 -- “Hic prior in cadaveribus oculum petit”, Isidor. Origin. l. 12. c. 7. “Effossos oculos vorat corvus”, Catullus ad Cominium, Ep. 105. v. 5.
- ft866 -- **hml [b** “ad virginem”, Glassius, Gejerus, Noldius, p. 144. No. 678.
- ft867 -- Deuteronomy Salomone, c. 2, 3, 4, 5.
- ft868 -- Ebr. Comment. p. 195.
- ft869 -- “Dedecus hoc sumpta dissimulavit aqua”, Ovid. Amor. l. 3. Eleg. 6. in fine.
- ft870 -- Tertull. Apolog. c. 43. Vid. Turnebi Adversar. l. 14. c. 12.
- ft871 -- “Nec bellua tetrior ulla est, quam servi rabies in libera colla furentis”, Claudian. in Eutrop. l. 1. v. 183, 184.

- ft872 -- "Asperius nihil est humili, cum surgit in altum", Claudian. ib. v. 181.
- ft873 -- **μυμκϳ m μυμκϳ** "sapientia, sapientia imbuta"; Heb. "sapientificata", Piscator, Gejerus.
- ft874 -- "Sapientiora sapientibus", so Sept. V. L. Arabic and Syriac versions; "sapientia superant, vel prudentissimos", Tigurine version.
- ft875 -- Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. 1. 4. c. 22. col. 598.
- ft876 -- **εψνεα μελισσαων** Iliad. 2. v. 87. "Et populos et proelia dicam", Georgic. 1. 4. v. 4, 5.
- ft877 -- Iliad. 2. v. 459, 469. & 15. v. 690, 691.
- ft878 -- Poem. Admon. v. 158, 159.
- ft879 -- Deuteronomy Natura Deorum, l. 3.
- ft880 -- Deuteronomy Animal. l. 16. c. 15.
- ft881 -- Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 30.
- ft882 -- **μυηρς οι χοιρογρυλλιοι**, Sept. "choerogryllii", Vatablus; "mures montani", Junius & Tremellius, Cartwright; "arctomyes", Schultens.
- ft883 -- Epist. ad Sun. & Fretelli, fol. 30, C. tom. 3.
- ft884 -- Cuniculosa Celtiberia, Epigram. ad Contubernales, 35. v. 18.
- ft885 -- Gaudet "in effossis habitare cuniculus antris", Martial. Epigr. l. 13. Ep. 58.
- ft886 -- Phaedri Fab. 37, 80.
- ft887 -- Deuteronomy Divinat. l. 2. c. 64. and so by Hesiod and Anaxilas in Athenaei Deipnosoph. l. 2. c. 22. p. 63.
- ft888 -- Vid. Hilier. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 187.
- ft889 -- Sopher Shorash. rad. **מְיָ** ; so Stockius, p. 377. "exeidens omnia, herbas, scil. et fruges", Schindler. col. 633. so Ben Melech.
- ft890 -- **wl k מְיָ** "unaquaeque sibi dividens", Bochart; so Schultens.
- ft891 -- Aelian. Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 57.
- ft892 -- Lexic. fol. 216. 1.
- ft893 -- Exercitat. l. 1. exercitat. 4. p. 31.
- ft894 -- Apud Dieteric. Antiqu. Biblio. p. 470.

- ft895 -- Nat. Hist. l. 3o. c. 10.
- ft896 -- Confess. l. 10. c. 35.
- ft897 -- Golius, col. 1208. Hottinger. Smegin Oriental. l. 1. c. 7. p. 199.
- ft898 -- Philosoph. Transact. abridged, vol. 2. p. 800. and vol. 5. part. 1. p. 24.
- ft899 -- Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 22. c. 25. & l. 29. c. 4.
- ft900 -- Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 1. & Physog. c. 5.
- ft901 -- Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 44.
- ft902 -- Deuteronomy Animal. l. 4. c. 34.
- ft903 -- Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16.
- ft904 -- ευστε λεων ορεσιτροφος, etc. Iliad. 12. v. 299.
- ft905 -- "Ceus saevum turba leonem", etc. Aeneid. l. 9. prope finem.
- ft906 -- μνηj m ryzrz "accinctus lumbis equus", Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cartwright, Glassius, Bochart, Buxtorf; "infibulatus lumbos equus", Schultens.
- ft907 -- Sopher. Shorash. in voce ryzrz.
- ft908 -- Deuteronomy Physiognom. c. 6.
- ft909 -- Lexic. fol. 28. 1.
- ft910 -- T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 92. 2.
- ft911 -- Golius, col. 1092.
- ft912 -- Deuteronomy Animal. l. 7. c. 26.
- ft913 -- "Dux pecoris hircus, duxerat hircus oves", Tibullus, l. 2. Eleg. 1. v. 58.
- ft914 -- Specimen. Arab. Hist. p. 203. So "kuma" is used for people in the Alcoran, Surat. Joseph. v. 9.
- ft915 -- "Pressi copia lactis", Virgil. Bucolic. eclog. 1. v. 82. "Et lactia massa coacti", Ovid. Metamorph. l. 8. v. 666.
- ft916 -- "Causem bubulum manu pressum", Sueton. in Octav. c. 76.
- ft917 -- Onomastic. Sacr. p. 268.
- ft918 -- "Venus enervat vireis", Avienus.

- ft919 -- Don Joseph apud Schindler. col. 990.
- ft920 -- **rkç ya** “ubi sechar?” Montanus, Vatlablus; “ubi (est) sicera?”, Cocceius, Michaelis; so Ben Melech.
- ft921 -- **rkç wa** “siceram”, Cocceius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Gussetius. p. 20. Schultens.
- ft922 -- “Nunc vino pellite curas”, Horat. Carmin, l. 1. Ode 7. v. 31. “Tu spem reducis”, etc. ib. l. 3. Ode 21. v. 17.
- ft923 -- **hnçy** “mutet”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus, Michaelis; “demutet”, Schultens.
- ft924 -- Valer. Maxim l. 6. c. 2. extern. 1.
- ft925 -- **çpn yrml** “his qui amaro sunt animo”, V. L. Pagninus, Tigurine version: “amaris animo”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; “amaris animus”, Vatlablus, Piscator.
- ft926 -- “Tunc dolor a curae rugaqae frontis abit”, Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 1.
- ft927 -- **wl m** [“laboris sui”, Pagninus, Montanus.
- ft928 -- Cyprius poeta apud Suidam in voce **οινος**.
- ft929 -- Homer. Odys. 4. v. 220, 221.
- ft930 -- Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 87, 88.
- ft931 -- Nat. Hist. l. 21, c. 21.
- ft932 -- Symposiac. l. 7. Probl. 5. p. 705.
- ft933 -- Vid. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1. Bemidbar Rabba, s. 10. fol. 198. 4.
- ft934 -- **Pwl j ynb** “filiormn transitus”, Montanus, Gejerus, Michaelis; “transeuntis, sub. seculi”, Vatlablus, so Ben Melech; “filiorum mutationis loci”, Piscator; “filii mutationis, h. e. hujus mundi”, Baynus.
- ft935 -- Demonstrat. Evangel. Prop. 4. p. 234.
- ft936 -- **lyj tça** “mulierem fortem”, V. L. Pagninus, Mercerus; “mulierem virtutis”, Montanus, Vatlablus; “strenuam”, Junius & Tremellus, Piscator, Cocceius, Schultens.
- ft937 -- “Mulierem opum”, so Aben Ezra.

- ft938 -- “Conjux dea contigit uni”, Ovid. *Metamorph.* l. 11. fol. 6. v. ult.
- ft939 -- Enarrat. in loc. p. 1099. tom. 2.
- ft940 -- Vid. Homer. *Iliad* 3. v. 125. & 6. v. 490, 491. & 22. v. 440. *Odyss.* l. v. 357. & 5. v. 62.
- ft941 -- “Cujus, ante torum calathi, lanaque mollis erat”, Ovid. *Fasti*, l. 2. prope finem.
- ft942 -- Valerius Maximus, l. 10. p. 348.
- ft943 -- Apud Plin. *Nat. Hist.* l. 8. c. 48.
- ft944 -- Plin. *ibid.*
- ft945 -- Pomponius Subinus in Virgil. *Cyrin*, p. 1939.
- ft946 -- “Pallade placata, lanam mollire puellae discant, et plenas exonerare colos”, Ovid. *Fast.* l. 3. prope finem.
- ft947 -- *Metamorph.* l. 4. Fab. 1. v. 34, 35.
- ft948 -- *Georgic.* l. 4.
- ft949 -- Curt. *Hist.* l. 5. c. 2.
- ft950 -- Sueton. in *Vit. August.* c. 64.
- ft951 -- *Ibid.* c. 73.
- ft952 -- Vid. Buxtorf. *Lex. Rabbin.* col. 1742.
- ft953 -- Varro apud Chartar. de *Imag. Deorum*, p. 88.
- ft954 -- **hypk pj b** “cum voluptate altro neis manibus”, so some in Vatablus, Tigurine version; so Cocceius, Michaelis, Piscator, Gejerus, Schultens.
- ft955 -- Bacchylides spud Athenaei *Deipnosoph.* l. 2. c. 3. p. 39.
- ft956 -- “Gauldetque diurnos, ut famulae, praebere cibos”, Claudian. de *Bello Gild.* v. 71, 72.
- ft957 -- “Lumbos defractos velim”, Stichus, *Act. 2. Sc. 1. v. 37.*
- ft958 -- **hrn** “lucerna ejus”, V. L. Tigurine version, Michaelis, Schultens.
- ft959 -- Homer, *Odyss.* l. v. 357. & 21. v. 351.

- ft960 -- **μynç** “indigitat vestem duplo crassiore, Stockius, p. 1122.
 “duplicibus, V. L. Paginus, Tigurine version, Gataker, Gejerus;
 “penulis duplicibus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “duplicatis”,
 Cocceius: such as Homer describes, made by the wife of Hector, Iliad
 22. v. 440, 441. see Odyss. 19. v. 225, 226, 241. “change of raiment”,
 David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 218. 1.
- ft961 -- Vid. Braunium de Vest. Sacredot. Heb. l. 1. c. 15. p. 309.
- ft962 -- Geograph. l. 16. p. 521.
- ft963 -- Sopher. Shorash. rad **zds**
- ft964 -- **yn[nkl]** “Chananaeo”, V. L. Mercerus, Cocceius, Gejerus;
 “negotiatori Phoenicio”, Schultens.
- ft965 -- **hmkj b** “de sapientia”, Mercerus.
- ft966 -- **dsj trwt** “lex misericordiae”, Montanus.
- ft967 -- “Instructio gratiae”, Gejerus; “lex, vel doctrina gratiae”, Cocceius,
 so the Targum; “doctrina benignitatis”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
- ft968 -- **htyb twkyl h** “vias domus suae”, Paginus, Montanus, Mercerus,
 Gejerus, Michaelis; “ambulationes domus suae”, Cocceius.
- ft969 -- “Forma bonum fragile est”, Ovid. de Arte Amandi, l. 2.