

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”, (~~218B~~ 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 ^{<20726>}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 “³¹⁸⁹Proverbs 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, (^{<0122>}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, (~~1288B~~ 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, (~~410B~~ 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, (~~1287B~~ Proverbs 23:27); as clear running waters of a well or fountain from the dirty waters of a filthy puddle; (see ~~3107B~~ 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.