

# 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, (<sup>2106E</sup>Proverbs 6:1); and represented as a snare and a net, in which men are taken, (<sup>2106D</sup>Proverbs 6:2); and advice is given what to do in such a case, for safety in it, and deliverance from it, (<sup>2106B</sup>Proverbs 6:3-5); The sin of slothfulness is exposed, by observing the industry of the ant, (<sup>2106B</sup>Proverbs 6:6-8); by expostulating with the sluggard for his continuance in sloth, and by mimicking him, (<sup>2106B</sup>Proverbs 6:9,10); and by the poverty it brings upon him, (<sup>2106I</sup>Proverbs 6:11). Then a naughty wicked man is described, by his mouth, eyes, feet, fingers, and heart, whose ruin is sudden and inevitable, (<sup>2106I</sup>Proverbs 6:11-15). The seven things hateful to God are particularly named, (<sup>2106G</sup>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, (<sup>2106I</sup>Proverbs 6:20-23). Especially to preserve from the lewd woman cautioned against, (<sup>2106F</sup>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, (<sup>2106G</sup>Proverbs 6:26); from the unavoidable ruin such come into, (<sup>2106Z</sup>Proverbs 6:27-29); from the sin of uncleanness being greater than that of theft, (<sup>2106D</sup>Proverbs 6:30,31); from the folly the adulterer betrays; from the destruction of his soul, and the disgrace he brings on himself, (<sup>2106Z</sup>Proverbs 6:32,33); and from the rage and irreconcilable offence of the husband of the adulteress, (<sup>2106B</sup>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<sup>f122</sup>; 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”,<sup>f123</sup> 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<sup>f124</sup> 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”<sup>f125</sup>; 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”<sup>f126</sup>; 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”<sup>f127</sup>, 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<sup>f128</sup>;

*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<sup>f129</sup>; 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<sup>f130</sup> 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<sup>f131</sup>;

*[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<sup>f132</sup> 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<sup>f133</sup>, 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<sup>f134</sup> 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<sup>f135</sup>.

**Ver. 9.** *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?* etc.] Or “lie”<sup>f136</sup> in bed, indulging in sloth and ease; while the industrious ant is busy in getting in its provisions, even by moonlight, as naturalists<sup>f137</sup> 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”<sup>f138</sup>. 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”<sup>f139</sup>; 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”<sup>f140</sup>: 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”<sup>f141</sup>. 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, (<sup><5118></sup>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, (<sup><6115></sup>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<sup>f142</sup>, 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, (<sup><5120></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:10 <sup><6311></sup>Revelation 13:11). So mimics are said to speak with their hands; some have been famous in this way<sup>f143</sup>.

**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”<sup>f144</sup>: 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”<sup>f145</sup>; 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”<sup>f146</sup>: 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”<sup>f147</sup>; 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 (<sup>2805</sup>Proverbs 30:15,18,29 <sup>809</sup>Job 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, (<sup>2169</sup>Proverbs 6:19); it being what was last mentioned in the character of the wicked man, (<sup>2064</sup>Proverbs 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”<sup>f148</sup>; 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”, (<sup>3016</sup>James 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, (<sup><3004></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4 <sup><5042></sup>1 Timothy 4:2 <sup><6676></sup>Revelation 17:6).

**Ver. 18.** *An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations*, etc.] Or, “thoughts of wickedness”<sup>f149</sup>; 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 “<sup><3064></sup>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, (<sup><6024></sup>Revelation 2:24);

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

**Ver. 19.** *A false witness [that] speaketh lies*, etc.] Or, “that speaketh lies, [even] a false witness”<sup>f150</sup>; 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”<sup>f151</sup>; 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 (<sup><3004></sup>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, (<sup><ARB></sup>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 <sup><ARB></sup>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, (<sup><ARB></sup>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”<sup>f152</sup> 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”<sup>f153</sup>, 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 <sup><B116></sup>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 <sup><D118></sup>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<sup>f154</sup>;

*from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman*; the same with the evil woman, the lewd and adulterous one; (see <sup><D116></sup>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, (<sup><G170></sup>Revelation 17:1,2,5); as this woman is called “the woman of evil”<sup>f155</sup>, for so it may be rendered, one very evil, given up and abandoned to sin; so antichrist is called “the man of sin”, (<sup><D118></sup>2 Thessalonians 2:3); and as this woman is said to have the “smoothness of a strange tongue”<sup>f156</sup>, 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, (<sup>4153</sup>Matthew 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, (<sup>66704</sup>Revelation 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, (<sup>42153</sup>Luke 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”<sup>f157</sup>; 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, (<sup>661813</sup>Revelation 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<sup>f158</sup>; and it is a saying of Pythagoras,

“it is a like thing to fall into fire and into a woman<sup>f159</sup>,”

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<sup>f160</sup>, and there is no possibility of being unhurt by them: (see <sup><K&I2></sup>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, (<sup><R40></sup>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, (<sup><O&E></sup>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 <sup><A10></sup>1 Corinthians 7:1”);

*shall not be innocent*; or free<sup>f161</sup> 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”, (<sup><S104></sup>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”<sup>f162</sup>; 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 (<sup><0221></sup>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, (<sup><0221></sup>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, (<sup><127></sup>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"<sup>f163</sup>; 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<sup>f164</sup> 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 "<sup><18></sup>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"<sup>f165</sup>, 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<sup>f166</sup> in later times; or from the civil magistrate, being ordered by him to be beaten<sup>f167</sup> or stoned; or from God himself inflicting diseases on him; (see <sup><127></sup>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"<sup>f168</sup>; 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.