

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 ^{²¹⁰⁶Proverbs 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 aflame 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, (^{²¹⁰⁸Revelation 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 ^{²¹⁰⁶2 Timothy 3:6,9);}

I discerned among the youths; or “children”^{f172}; at least in understanding, the children Jezebel, (^{²¹⁰⁸Revelation 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, (¹⁰²²Revelation 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, (^{<צמ>}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, (^{<6208>}Revelation 21:8). The souls of men, and the ruin of them, are what the whore of Rome deals in, (^{<6813>}Revelation 18:13); she goes into perdition, into the bottomless pit, herself, and carries all her worshippers with her, (^{<6678>}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.