

CHAPTER 13

Ver. 1. *A wise son [heareth] his father's instruction*, etc.] As he should, and has good reason to do; since it must be cordial, faithful, and disinterested, as well as the effect of age and experience. He “asks for it” and “loves” it, as Jarchi supplies the text; he likes and approves of it, is well pleased with it, and delights in it; seeing it tends to his profit and advantage; he “receives” it, as the Targum, so Ben Melech; he listens to and obeys it, and acts agreeably to it, which shows him to be wise; and this is the way to be wiser and wiser. So one that is spiritually wise will attend to and receive the instruction of Wisdom or Christ; who stands in the relation of an everlasting fin, her to his children; whose instruction is the doctrine of the Gospel; which a wise man hears, so as to understand it; to love and like it, and approve of it; cordially to embrace and obey it, and put it in practice; (see ^{<4074>}Matthew 7:24). The word also signifies “correction”^{f355}, because instruction often comes by it; and he that is a wise man will hear the rod and him that has appointed it, and learn to know his mind by it, and receive instruction from it: or is “chastised by his father”^{f356}, and takes it well, (^{<3189>}Micah 6:9);

but a scorner heareth not rebuke; that is, a son who is a scorner, as the Targum and Aben Ezra; one that makes a mock at sin, and scoffs at religion: such a man will be so far from hearing, attending to, and receiving the rebuke and reproof of his father, that he will scoff also at that; such as were the sons in law of Lot, and the sons of Eli and Samuel. So scornful men, that make a jest of everything that is sacred, will not hearken to the reproof of God's word, to the rebukes of Gospel ministers, or even to the rebukes of Providence, which will issue in their destruction, (^{<3151>}Proverbs 5:11, 12).

Ver. 2. *A man shall eat good by the fruit of [his] mouth*, etc.] Or, “of the mouth”; either another's or his own, since the word his is not in the text; though it is supplied by the Targum, Aben Ezra, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, as by us. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “shall eat of the fruits of righteousness”. I should choose to translate the whole thus: “a good man shall eat of the fruit of his mouth”: so Aben Ezra interprets it, “a good man shall eat”; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it. The sense is, that a good man brings forth good

things out of the good treasure of his heart by his mouth; which not only minister grace to the hearers, and are for the use of edifying to others, but also to himself; while he gives wholesome counsel and advice to others, it is of service to himself; while he comforts others, he comforts himself; and while he teaches and instructs others, he teaches and instructs himself: so a good minister of Jesus Christ, while he feeds others with knowledge and understanding, he himself is nourished up with the words of faith and good doctrine; so Jarchi refers it to a man's doctrine, and the reward of it here and hereafter;

but the soul of the transgressors [shall eat] violence; Jarchi interprets it, “the delight of transgressors is violence;”^{f357}

that is, what their souls desire, choose, will, and take pleasure in, even using violence, and doing mischief to others; and to the same purpose is the note of Gersom: but Aben Ezra supplies it from the former clause, as we do; and the sense is, that the same measure they mete out to others shall be measured out to them again; what they give others to eat, they shall eat themselves, even the bread of violence; (see ^{<1046>}Proverbs 4:16 10:6). And this will be the case of all perfidious and treacherous ones, as the word^{f358} used signifies; of false teachers and cruel persecutors; and of Babylon, of whom it will he said, “reward her as she rewarded you”, (^{<6816>}Revelation 18:6).

Ver. 3. *He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life,* etc.] He that keeps his mouth shut keeps it as with a bridle; keeps it from speaking things of other persons, particularly of such as are in high places, of kings and princes, and civil magistrates: he keeps himself quiet and comfortable; keeps himself from many troubles, which otherwise he would come into; keeps his life from danger, to which it would be exposed, should he speak evil of dignities, or give himself the freedom, as some do, whereby they are brought to an untimely end; (see ^{<10821>}Proverbs 18:21); besides, persons ought to be careful of their words, since by them a man will either be justified or condemned hereafter, (^{<10237>}Matthew 12:37);

[but] he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction; or “consternation”^{f359}: he that is rash and inconsiderate, hasty with his lips, a talkative man; that speaks freely everything that comes into his mind, regardless of the characters of men, or consequences of things; is often brought into frights and fears, through the menaces and threatenings of

men in power, whose characters he has made too free with, and oftentimes is brought to ruin and destruction: so he, whose throat is as an open sepulchre, belching out filthy words, horrid oaths, curses, and imprecations, destruction is near him, even in all his ways; and the man of sin, that opens his mouth in blasphemy against God, and his tabernacle, and his saints, shall go into perdition, (^{<613>}Revelation 13:5,6 17:8).

Ver. 4. *The soul of the sluggard desireth, and [hath] nothing,* etc.] He desires knowledge, but does not care to be at any pains to get it, and so has it not; he desires riches, but chooses not to make use of the means, to be diligent and industrious, and so he is without them; he desires to wear good clothes and rich raiment, but is unwilling to labour for them, and therefore is clothed with rags; he desires food, and plenty of it, but refuses to work for it; and he that will not work should not eat, and therefore he has it not, but starves and famishes: and, in spiritual things, the sluggard desires heaven and happiness, but does not care to do the duties of religion; he would die the death of the righteous, but is unwilling to live his life; to abstain from sin, and live soberly and righteously, is too hard service for him; he does not choose to do or suffer anything for the cause of Christ and true religion. Jarchi's note is, that

“in the future state he shall see the glory of the wise man, and desire it; but shall not attain to it;”

but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat; become rich; increase in temporal things, and have great plenty and prosperity; and so, in spiritual matters, such who are diligent in the use of means, constantly attend on the word and ordinances, and labour for the meat which endures to everlasting life; such are filled and satisfied, as with marrow and fatness; and become fat and flourishing, and fruitful in every good word and work; and shall at last arrive to that state where there will be no more hunger and thirst.

Ver. 5. *A righteous [man] hateth lying,* etc.] Or, “a word of falsehood”^{f360}; as being contrary to honour, truth, and conscience. He hates it in himself and others; he hates all sorts of lies, lies in common conversation, religious lies, doctrinal ones, false doctrines, lies spoken in hypocrisy; such as the followers of antichrist spread, being given up unto them that they might be damned, (^{<500>}1 Timothy 4:2 ^{<511>}2 Thessalonians 2:11,12); these are an abomination to God and all good men, (^{<617>}Revelation 21:27);

but a wicked [man] is loathsome, and cometh to shame; or, “causes” or “spreads a stink”^{f361}: all wicked men are loathsome and abominable, being very corrupt in principle and practice; all over defiled with sin, and covered with wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores, from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet; and especially liars, who are often brought to shame and confusion in this life, and will hereafter come to everlasting shame and contempt. Or, “makes himself to stink”^{f362}; in the nostrils of all good men, and so brought to shame: or “digs”; a metaphor, as Cartwright thinks, from those that dig in the earth, where such as are covered with shame would gladly put their heads.

Ver. 6. *Righteousness keepeth [him that is] upright in the way*, etc.] Men of uprightness and integrity, whose hearts are sincere in the ways of God; the principle of grace and righteousness in them keeps them in those ways, and will not suffer them to turn aside into crooked paths; the word of righteousness, the doctrine of the Gospel, is a means of preserving them from sin, and of keeping them in the right way; particularly the doctrine of Christ’s righteousness, and justification by it, is a great antidote against sin, and a powerful motive and incentive to the performance of good works, and all the duties of religion: it engages men to observe every command of Christ, to walk in all his ways; and is a great preservative from false doctrine and antichristian worship;

but wickedness overthroweth the sinner; it is the cause of his utter overthrow, of his being punished with everlasting destruction. It is, in the Hebrew text, “sin”^{f363} itself; the sinner is so called, because he is perfectly wicked, as Jarchi observes; he is nothing but sin, a mere mass of sin and corruption. Aben Ezra renders it, “the man of sin”; and it may be well applied to him, who is emphatically called so, and is likewise the son of perdition; who, for his wickedness, will be overthrown and destroyed at the coming of Christ, and with the brightness of it, (~~3~~2 Thessalonians 2:3,8).

Ver. 7. *There is that maketh himself rich, yet [hath] nothing*, etc.] Some persons make a great show of riches, and would be thought to be rich; put on fine clothes, live at a high rate, and appear in great pomp, and yet not worth a farthing; which they do to gratify their pride and ambition, and to draw in others to trust them with their substance. So in spirituals; some persons, as hypocrites, would be thought to be rich in grace, and to be possessed of all the graces of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love; and yet have nothing of true grace, only what is counterfeit; the root of the matter is not

in them; no principle of life and grace, only a name to live; nothing of the power, only the form, of godliness; no oil of grace in the vessels of their hearts, only the lamp of an outward profession: some, as the Pharisees, would be thought to be rich in good works, when they have no good thing in them, and do nothing that is spiritually good; either what they do is not done according to the revealed will of God, as many things done by the Pharisees formerly, and by the Papists now, or they do not flow from love; nor are they done in faith, nor in the name and strength of Christ, nor to the glory of God by him: some, as the same persons, would be thought to be rich in righteousness, when they have no true righteousness at all; not the righteousness of the law, which requires perfection of obedience; not the righteousness of faith, which is the righteousness of another; the righteousness of God is imputed, and is without the works of men; they have no righteousness that can justify them, or save them, or bring them to heaven: some, as the Arminians, would be thought to be rich in spiritual strength, and in the power of their free will, when they have neither will nor power to do anything spiritually good; neither to regenerate and convert themselves, nor to come to Christ, nor to do any good work: some, as the Perfectionists, would be thought to be so rich as to be free from sin, and perfect in grace, when they have none at all, as says the apostle, (¹⁰⁰⁸1 John 1:8); their picture is drawn in Ephraim, and their language spoke by him, (²⁸¹⁸Hosea 12:8). The apostate church of Rome would be thought rich with the merits of saints, and works of supererogation, when she has no merit at all; nor is it possible for a creature to, merit anything at the hands of God; compare with all this (⁶⁸¹⁷Revelation 3:17);

[there is] that maketh himself poor, yet [hath] great riches; there are some, on the other hand, who greatly degrade themselves; live in a very mean way, as though they were very poor; either through covetousness, or because they would not draw upon them the envy of their neighbours, or encourage their friends to borrow of them, or invite thieves to steal from them, or for some low end or another: the pope of Rome sometimes affects to seem poor, though at other times, and in other respects, he would be thought rich; at the Lateran procession the newly elected pope scatters pieces of brass money among the people, saying, as Peter, whose successor he pretends to be, did, “Silver and gold have I none”, (⁴⁴⁸⁶Acts 3:6); yet comes into great riches. These words may be applied spiritually, in a good sense; there are some who are sensible of their spiritual poverty, and own

it; they ingenuously express the sense they have of their own nothingness and unworthiness; they declare they have nothing, and can do nothing; they renounce all their own works in the business of salvation, and ascribe it wholly to the grace of God; they have very mean thoughts, and speak very meanly of themselves, as less than the least of saints, and the chief of sinners: yea, some carry the matter too far in the expressions of their poverty; will not be persuaded that they have the true riches of grace, at least will not own it; but give way to their doubts and fears about it, when they are possessed of much; to whom some think these words are applicable. However, they are to such who are “poor in spirit”, (^{<418B>}Matthew 5:3), as before described; who have, notwithstanding, “great riches”, the riches of justifying grace, the riches of Christ’s righteousness: the riches of pardoning grace, a large share thereof, much being forgiven them; the riches of sanctifying grace, faith, more precious than that of gold that perisheth, with all other graces; the riches of spiritual knowledge, preferable to gold and silver: they have Christ, and all things along with him; they have God to be their portion, and exceeding great reward; they have a large estate, an incorruptible inheritance, in heaven; they have a better and a more enduring substance there; “theirs is the kingdom of heaven”, (^{<408B>}Matthew 5:3); it is prepared for them, and given to them; compare with this (^{<416D>}2 Corinthians 6:10).

Ver. 8. *The ransom of a man’s life [are] his riches*, etc.] As Benhadad’s were to him, when he was in the hands of the king of Israel, (^{<412B>}1 Kings 20:34); and as the treasures the ten men had in the field were to them, for the sake of which Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, slew them not, (^{<240B>}Jeremiah 41:8). This is the advantage of riches when a man is taken captive in war, or by pirates, or is in the hands of thieves and robbers, he can redeem himself by his money; or when his life is in danger by diseases, he can procure healing medicines; or by famine, he can get food to preserve it, when a poor man cannot: but this is not to be done always, and is only to be understood of a temporal life; for, as to the spiritual and eternal redemption of the soul of man, that requires a greater ransom price than such corruptible things as silver and gold; nothing short of the precious blood of Christ is sufficient for that, (^{<133B>}Job 36:18 ^{<400B>}Psalm 49:6-8 ^{<401B>}1 Peter 1:18,19). Moreover, these words may not so much design the convenience as the inconvenience of riches to men; since these often invite thieves to assault their persons, and break into their houses, and threaten their lives; and put wicked men upon forming schemes, and

drawing up charges and accusations against them, purely to get their money; which bring their lives into danger, and which they can only redeem by their riches;

but the poor heareth not rebuke; no charge and accusation is brought against him; no rebuke or reproof is given him; no notice is taken of him, because nothing is to be got from him; he may sleep with his door unlocked, thieves will give him no disturbance; he may travel upon the road without being bid to stand^{f364}. Jarchi interprets this of him that is poor in the law; that hearkens not to reproofs and admonitions, given him to depart from evil: but rather it may be applied to the poor in spirit; who trust not in themselves and their own righteousness, but in the grace of God and righteousness of Christ; who indeed hear the rebukes of good men, and take them kindly; and of bad men, and return not revilings for them; and also the rebukes of Providence, or the chastisements of their heavenly Father, yet they will never hear any rebuke in wrath from him here or hereafter; when the rich in their own conceit, who trust in their riches and righteousness, and think to ransom their souls from death by them, will have rebukes with flames of fire.

Ver. 9. *The light of the righteous rejoiceth*, etc.] The light of joy and gladness, which is sown for them, and arises to them; the light of spiritual knowledge and experience they have; the light of sound doctrine; the light of good works, and a Gospel conversation; all this, as it is delightful to themselves and others, so it is increasing more and more to the perfect day, and it continues: so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, “light [is] always for the righteous”; especially it will be in the latter day, and particularly in the New Jerusalem state, when there will be no night, (⁶⁶²³Revelation 21:23-25);

but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out; the light of the righteous is like that of the sun, bright and pleasant; but the light of the wicked is like that of a lamp, lesser and not so agreeable, nor will it last; their prosperity is short lived, their joy is but for a moment; the pleasures of sin are but for a season; their candle soon goes out; it is put out in obscure darkness, and they themselves are reserved to blackness of darkness, (¹⁸¹⁸Job 18:5,6 20:5 ³¹¹¹Proverbs 20:20); as prosperous and flourishing as the kingdom of antichrist has been or is, it will be full of darkness, (⁶⁶¹²Revelation 16:12).

Ver. 10. *Only by pride cometh contention*, etc.] Though it comes by other things, yet by this chiefly, and there are no contentions without it: or

“truly”, “verily”, “certainly”^{f365}, by pride”, etc. Unless the words may be better rendered, “an empty man through pride will give contention”^{f366}, or make it; such as are empty of knowledge and wisdom; and such are generally the most proud, and are very apt to raise contentions, and foment divisions: contentions in families, in neighbourhoods, in towns, cities, and countries, and in churches, are generally owing to pride; what contentions and confusions has the pride of the pope of Rome brought into kingdoms and states, into councils, and into the church of God!

but with the well advised [is] wisdom: such who are humble and modest will seek counsel of God; will consult the sacred oracles, and ask advice of those who are superior to them in knowledge and understanding; and so will neither raise contentions themselves, nor join with those that make them, but do all they can to lay them; these show that true wisdom is with them.

Ver. 11. *Wealth [gotten] by vanity shall be diminished,* etc.] In an unjust or unlawful way, either by robbery and theft, as Aben Ezra; or by fraud and tricking, by overreaching and circumventing others; or by vain practices, as by cards or dice, and by stage playing and the like; or by curious and illicit arts, as necromancy, judiciary astrology, and such like things; whatever is gotten in a wicked way very seldom lasts long; it lessens by little and little till it comes to nothing^{f367}; see (^{<2471>}Jeremiah 17:11); and sometimes very quickly and suddenly, all at once; thus that mass of riches which the church of Rome has got together by her vain and wicked practices, by her idolatry, pardons, and indulgences, will in one hour come to nought, (^{<6087>}Revelation 18:17);

but he that gathereth by labour shall increase, or “that gathereth by the hand” or “in [it]”^{f368}; by hand labour in an honest way, or with the diligent hand, which maketh rich; who labours with his hand and gets by in sufficient to support himself and his family, and to give to the necessities of others; who does not lay it up in coffers, but keeps it in his hand to distribute; such generally thrive and flourish: some copies read it, “he that gathereth, d[], unto the hand”^{f369}, that gathers and puts it into the hands of others; that liberally communicates to the poor; he shall increase, as commonly liberal persons do; so the Targum,

“he that gathereth and giveth to the poor shall increase in substance.”

Ver. 12. *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick*, etc.] That is, the object hoped for; if it is not enjoyed so soon as expected, at least if it is delayed any length of time, the mind becomes uneasy, the heart sinks and fails, and the man is dispirited and ready to despond, and give up all hope of enjoying the desired blessing; whether it be deliverance from any evil, or the possession of any good;

but [when] the desire cometh, [it is] a tree of life; when that which is hoped and wished for, and has been long expected and desired, comes; when there is an accomplishment of men's wishes, it is as grateful to him as the tree of life was in Eden's garden; it gives him an unspeakable pleasure and delight. This may be applied to many things in a spiritual way, as to the first coming of Christ; and some have thought this is greatly regarded and chiefly intended; this was the object of the hope of Old Testament saints; and it was hoped for on a good foundation, on the promise of God, which was frequently repeated, enlarged, and confirmed; yet this promised and hoped for blessing was deferred a long time; from the first promise of it to its accomplishment were four thousand years; though not deferred longer than the appointed time, yet longer than the saints expected, and which sometimes made their hearts sick; they became weak and feeble, fearful and dispirited, lest it should never come to pass, which occasioned fresh promises and assurances to them; (see ^{<288B>}Isaiah 35:3,4 ^{<388B>}Habakkuk 2:3) (^{<388B>}Malachi 3:1); but when "the desire" came, Christ the desired object; and who is desirable for the excellencies of his person, his mediatorial qualifications, the work of redemption and salvation he came about, and the blessings he brought with him; and who is the "desire of all nations" that was to come, (^{<388B>}Haggai 2:7); it was exceeding joyful and delightful to all that expected him, and were looking for redemption in Israel, or Christ; "the coming desire"^{f370}, as it may be rendered, is "a tree of life", or "lives", the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; (see ^{<388B>}Proverbs 3:18). It may be applied also to the spiritual presence of Christ, and communion with him; this is what believers, being sometimes without, hope and wait for; and sometimes it is deferred a long time, at least they think it so, which makes them very uneasy, and even sick of love, as the church was, (^{<288B>}Song of Solomon 5:8); but when what they so earnestly desire is granted them, it is as if they were in Eden's garden, or rather in the paradise above, plucking the fruit of the tree of life: likewise it may be applied to eternal glory and happiness; this is the object of hope in the present state; it is sometimes impatiently expected and desired, and the

language of the soul is, “Why is his chariot so long in coming?” , “come, Lord Jesus, come quickly”, (~~(UKS)~~Judges 5:28 ~~(f22)~~Revelation 22:20); and when this desired happiness is enjoyed, how sweet will it be! and the sweeter for having been so much longed and wished for; and when the saints will be in the paradise of God, and eat of the tree of life in the midst of it, and never hunger more.

Ver. 13. *Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed*, etc.] The word of God. Either Christ, the essential Word; which must be a great evil, considering the dignity of his person; great ingratitude, considering the grace of his office; very dangerous, considering what a quick, sharp, and powerful Word he is: and such may be said to despise him who despise his ministers, and the Gospel preached by them; and which may be meant by the word, that being the word of God and of truth, the word of righteousness, peace, life, and salvation; and is to them that perish foolishness; and to whom it is so, they shall perish, and be punished with everlasting destruction, for their contempt of it, and disobedience to it. Or the written word may be meant, the Scriptures, which are given by inspiration of God, and therefore ought to be had in the greatest reverence; and yet are greatly slighted and despised by the man of sin and his followers; who set up and prefer their unwritten traditions to them, and so make them of none effect: such are all false teachers, that despise or abuse them, they bring destruction to themselves; for so the words may be rendered, “shall bring destruction to himself”, or shall receive detriment from it: so the Targum, from the word itself; the Syriac version, “by it”; and the Arabic version, “by the commandment itself”; by the threatenings in it, and according to them: or, “because of it”; because of the contempt of it;

but he that feareth the commandment; receives the word with reverence, trembles at it; fears God, and keeps his commandments, and fears to break them: he

shall be rewarded; with good, as the Targum adds; for in keeping the commandments of God there is great reward: or, “shall enjoy peace”, or “be in safety”^{f371}; for great peace have they which love the law of God, and serve it: or, “shall be sound, [and] in health”^{f372}; when those that despise it “shall be corrupted”^{f373}; as the word in the preceding clause may be rendered.

Ver. 14. *The law of the wise [is] a fountain of life*, etc.] Or “doctrine”^{f374}; the doctrine of those who are taught by the word, and are wise unto salvation; the words or doctrines of the wise, which are given forth by one Shepherd; the instructions of such who are like Scribes, well instructed themselves unto the kingdom of heaven: these are as a fountain of living water; which are the means of quickening dead sinners, and of reviving and refreshing the souls of weary saints; and bring life and immortality to light, and point and lead to eternal life: and so direct souls

to depart from the snares of death; the snares of sin, Satan, and the world, to shun and avoid them; with which men being entangled, are brought to destruction and death.

Ver. 15. *Good understanding giveth favour*, etc.] A good understanding in things natural and civil gives favour among men; and so a good understanding in divine and spiritual things gives a man favour among religious people, makes him taken notice of by them, and acceptable to them: and such an understanding no man has, unless it be given him; and such appear to have one that do the commandments of God, (^{<B10>}Psalm 111:10). The Israelites, for having and keeping the statutes of the Lord, were accounted by others a wise and an understanding people; and Christ, as man, when he increased in wisdom, grew in favour with God and men. It may be rendered, “good doctrine”, as the Vulgate Latin version, or “right doctrine”, as the Arabic version, “gives grace”^{f375}; is the means of conveying grace into the hearts of men, and of increasing it. What if it should be rendered, “grace gives a good understanding”^{f376}? since it is certain, that an understanding to know God and Christ is a gift of grace, (^{<B10>}1 John 5:20);

but the way of transgressors [is] hard; ungrateful and unpleasant to themselves and others; it is a rough and rugged way, in which they stumble and fall; and cannot walk with pleasure themselves, when their consciences are awakened, and they are loaded with guilt, and filled with terror; and must be very disagreeable to those who have seen the evil of them.

Ver. 16. *Every prudent [man] dealeth with knowledge*, etc.] In order to get more, and with men of knowledge for the same purpose; all he does is with knowledge and discretion; he does not meddle with things, nor has he to do with persons, he knows nothing of; he both acts and speaks with knowledge, cautiously, wisely, considering well time, place, and persons: and every wise and good man deals with evangelical knowledge, and

studies to grow in the knowledge of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; in the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ; the issue of which is life eternal;

but a fool layeth open [his] folly; or “spreads”^{f377} it; and exposes it to the view of everyone, by his foolish talk and indiscreet actions.

Ver. 17. *A wicked messenger falleth into mischief*, etc.] That does not do his errand right, nor deliver his message faithfully; such an one falls from the degree of honour in which he was into disgrace; he loses his master’s favour that sent him; he is degraded from his post and office: he falls “by evil”, or “into evil”^{f378}; by the evil of sin, into the evil of punishment. So wicked ministers and false teachers, such who transform themselves into the apostles of Christ and into angels of light, who corrupt the word of God, and handle it deceitfully; these shall receive their just condemnation; since they do a deal of mischief to the souls of men, and therefore shall fall into mischief themselves, even into everlasting perdition;

but a faithful ambassador [is] health; or, “an ambassador of truths”^{f379}; one that performs his embassy well and truly, he is salutary, useful, and profitable to himself, and to them that send him: the word for ambassador is translated an “hinge”, (⁴¹⁶⁴Proverbs 26:14); and he is so called, because upon his negotiations abroad the hinge of political affairs turn at home. An ambassador of Christ, who does his work faithfully, keeps back nothing that is profitable, but declares the whole counsel of God; the sound doctrines he delivers are health to the souls of men; as well as he is approved of God and Christ; and so it turns to his own health and advantage, who will hear one day said unto him, “Well done, good and faithful servant”, (⁴¹⁶³Matthew 25:23).

Ver. 18. *Poverty and shame [shall be to] him that refuseth instruction*, etc.] Of parents, masters, and ministers of the word; the instruction of wisdom, the instruction of the Gospel, in things relating to their present spiritual peace, and to their eternal welfare: such generally come to poverty and disgrace in this life, and to everlasting shame and contempt in another; (see ^{4161b}Proverbs 5:11,12);

but he that regardeth reproof; the reproof of the word, and of the ministers of it, and of all good men, and takes it kindly, and acts according to it,

shall be honoured; with riches and reputation; if not with the riches of this world, yet with the riches of grace and glory; and shall have honour among

the saints, and from the Lord himself; who will honour those that honour him, as they do who regard the reproof and instruction of his word, (^{<0823>}1 Samuel 2:30).

Ver. 19. *The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul*, etc.] Whether the desire be after riches and honour, after wisdom and knowledge; or after the best things, the knowledge of God, and communion with him; an interest in Christ, and the blessings of his grace, as pardon, righteousness, etc. and a right and title to eternal glory and happiness, and the enjoyment of that: and how sweet are these things the soul desires, when they are possessed! (see ^{<0132>}Proverbs 13:12); such are “the desires of the godly”, as the Septuagint render the word;

but [it is] abomination to fools to depart from evil; they cannot bear the thoughts of parting with their lusts; they are so delightful to them, not knowing anything of the sweetness of the things before mentioned; and which they can never enjoy without departing from sin, to which they are exceedingly averse.

Ver. 20. *He that walketh with wise [men] shall be wise*, etc.] Who is a companion of them that fear the Lord; converses frequently with them in private about spiritual and experimental things, and walks with them in public in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; he by those means grows wiser and wiser, gains a large stock of spiritual knowledge and experience; for this holds good both in natural and spiritual wisdom, a man of any capacity at all will improve by keeping wise company;

but a companion of fools shall be destroyed; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “shall become like them”; be a fool as they are, and grow still more and more foolish. The Septuagint version is, “shall be known”; known by the company he keeps to be a fool also: or rather, “shall be broken”^{&f380}; ruined and destroyed, “evil communications corrupt good manners”, (^{<4153>}1 Corinthians 15:33), and so bring to ruin and destruction.

Ver. 21. *Evil pursueth sinners*, etc.] They pursue the evil of sin, and the evil of punishment pursues them, and at last overtakes them; their damnation, though it may seem to slumber and linger, it does not; it is upon the full speed after them, and will quickly seize upon them. Some understand this of the evil of sin in the conscience, which pursues the sinner, and fills him with terror;

but to the righteous good shall be repaid; or, “he shall recompense the righteous with good”^{f381}, or “good to the righteous”; that is, God shall do it; for all the good things they have done, from a right principle, and to a right end; which good works of theirs will pursue and follow them; and for all the ill things they have suffered for righteousness’s sake, a reward of grace, though not of debt, will be given them; as they have had their evil things here, they shall have their good things hereafter; as well as are often recompensed in this life, either in themselves or in their posterity, as follows.

Ver. 22. *A good [man] leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children*, etc.] He not only has a sufficiency for the present support of himself and family; but is so prospered and succeeded, as to leave an inheritance after him; and which is continued to and enjoyed, not only by his immediate offspring, but theirs also; for being got honestly, it wears well; (see ^{<1031>}Proverbs 13:11);

and the wealth of the sinner [is] laid up for the just; the riches which wicked men get are laid up in the purposes of God for good men; and in his providence they are translated from the one to the other: so the riches of the Egyptians were designed for the Israelites, and by the providence of God were put into their hands; (see ^{<18716>}Job 27:16,17) (^{<1038>}Proverbs 28:8 ^{<1026>}Ecclesiastes 2:26).

Ver. 23. *Much food [is in] the tillage of the poor*, etc.] The poor are generally employed in tilling land; from whose labours in ploughing and sowing much food arises to men, bread to the eater, and seed to the sower: or a poor farmer, that has but a small farm, a few acres of land, to till; yet through his diligence and industry, with the blessing of God upon it, he gets a comfortable livelihood for himself and family; much food, or a sufficiency of it for the present year, and seed to sow land again the following year;

but there is [that is] destroyed for want of judgment; or discretion in tilling his land, and managing the affairs of husbandry, which is God’s gift, (^{<2336>}Isaiah 28:26); or, “through injustice”^{f382}, as some render it; for want of doing that which is right and just; not paying his labourers their hire and wages, as he ought, and so it is blasted, and comes to ruin. This may be spiritually applied. By the “poor” may be understood the poor ministers of the Gospel; who, though poor, make many rich, (^{<1030>}2 Corinthians 6:10); much spiritual food is to be had under their labours and ministrations, they

being employed in cultivating the churches: or else the poor saints and poor churches themselves may be meant; who are tilled by them, among whom is plenty of spiritual provisions; as in the poor Protestant churches, who, though in the wilderness, are nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, when there is no food in the apostate church of Rome: and so by the “tillage” may be meant the church of Christ itself, which is “God’s husbandry”, (~~400~~1 Corinthians 3:9); his agriculture, his tillage, his arable land; which he has separated and distinguished from the wide world, and employs his power and care about. For he is the husbandman, (~~450~~John 15:1); it is he that breaks up the fallow ground of men’s hearts; that makes the ground good which he tills; who sows the seed of the word, and the seed of his grace there; who waters it with the dews of his grace, and causes his people to grow as the corn, and ripens them for glory: and when the harvest is come, the end of the world or of life, he sends his reapers, his angels, to gather them, the wheat, into his garner. And he employs the ministers of the word as under husbandmen, as labourers under him and with him; these are the ploughmen that hold the plough of the Gospel, and manage that; these are his sowers that go forth, bearing the precious seed of the word, and sow it under his direction; and these water the ground that is sown and planted; their doctrines distil as the rain and dew upon it; and these bring in their sheaves with joy at last. And now in this tillage is much spiritual food; in God’s husbandry, the church, are the word and ordinances, in which are milk for babes, and meat for strong men, salutary, wholesome, nourishing, and strengthening food; here Christ, the best food, is set forth to faith to feed upon; true and real food, meat and drink indeed, spiritual, savoury, satisfying food; soul reviving, refreshing, and nourishing food; here is plenty of it, enough and to spare: and yet there are some that are destroyed for want of spiritual judgment and discerning; who take the poison of false teachers instead of the food to be had under a Gospel ministry; so the followers of the man of sin are given up to believe a lie and be damned; for want of judgment, they receive the grossest absurdities, and perish; as others also give in to damnable heresies, denying the deity, satisfaction, and righteousness of Christ, and other soul destroying notions; (see ~~306~~Hosea 4:6 ~~320~~2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 ~~600~~2 Peter 2:1).

Ver. 24. *He that spareth his rod hateth his son*, etc.] Who withholds or withdraws his rod of correction, which is in his hand, which he has power to use, and ought to exercise at proper times; he, instead of loving his son, may be said to hate him; for such fond love is no better than hatred; and, if

he really hated him, he could scarcely do a more ill thing by him than not to correct him for a fault; which was the sin of good old Eli, and both he and his sons suffered for it;

but he that loveth him; that has a true love for his son, and a hearty concern for his welfare and future good; he will regulate his affections by his judgment, and not give way to a fond passion, to the prejudice of his child: but he

chasteneth him betimes, or “in the morning”^{f383}; in the morning of his infancy, before vicious habits are contracted, or he is accustomed to sinning, and hardened in it; or as soon as a crime is perpetrated, before it is forgot or repeated: or every morning, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; that is, continually, as often as it is necessary, or as faults are committed.

Ver. 25. *The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul*, etc.] He is blessed with a sufficient competency to live upon; and he is contented with what he has, and uses it moderately; he has enough to eat, and is contented with his portion, and eats no more than sufficeth; he eats to the satisfying of his appetite, and no more; he does not indulge to luxury and excess: and so as to spiritual things; he eats to the satisfying of his soul, with the goodness and fatness of God’s house, with the word and ordinances, with the promises of the Gospel, and with Jesus Christ, the bread of life; with these he is satisfied, as with marrow and fatness;

but the belly of the wicked shall want; not only spiritual food, which he has no appetite for, but corporeal food; he shall starve in the midst of plenty, not having a heart to put that food into his mouth, and fill his belly with it, as nature requires, through his covetousness; or, having spent his substance in rioting and wantonness, wants bread to satisfy the craving of his appetite.