

CHAPTER 23

Ver. 1. *When thou sittest to eat with a ruler*, etc.] Either a supreme ruler, a king, or a subordinate ruler, a nobleman, a judge, a civil magistrate, a person of honour, dignity, and authority; and to sit at table with such is sometimes allowed, and is always reckoned an honour; this particularly diligent and industrious persons are admitted to, who not only are brought to stand before kings and great persons, but to sit at table with them, and eat food with them. And now the wise man advises such how to behave themselves when this is the case:

consider diligently what [is] before thee; or, “considering consider”^{f618}: take special notice of the food and drink set upon the table, and consider well which may be most proper and safe to eat and drink of; for though a man may lawfully eat of whatsoever is set before him; every creature of God being good, if it be received with thanksgiving, and sanctified by the word of God and prayer; yet it is a piece of wisdom to make use of that which is most conducive to health, and less ensnaring; and to observe moderation in all, and not indulge to gluttony and drunkenness: and he should consider also who is before him, which sense the words wilt bear; the ruler that has invited him, and sits at the table with him, and take care that he says or does nothing that may give him offence; and also the noble personages that are guests with him, and behave towards them suitably to their rank and dignity; observe their words and conduct, and imitate the same; yea, even he should consider the servants and waiters that attend, lest, behaving in an indecent and disorderly manner, they should report it to his disadvantage to their ruler or others. But how much greater an honour is it to sit at table with the King of kings, and with his princes, and sup with him! when it becomes the saints, who have this honour, to consider what is set before them; the richest dainties, a feast of things, the body and blood of Christ, which should he spiritually discerned by faith; and not the elements of bread and wine only: likewise the persons before whom they are should be considered; Christ, who sits at his table, and the princes of his people with him; and therefore should not feed without fear, and in a disorderly and indecent manner, as the Corinthians are charged, but with all reverence and humility.

Ver. 2. *And put a knife to thy throat*, etc.] Refrain from too much talk at the table; give not too loose to thy tongue, but bridle it, considering in whose presence thou art; do not use too much freedom, either with the ruler or fellow guests; which, when persons have ate and drank well, they are too apt to do, and sometimes say things offensive to one or the other; it is good for a man to be upon his guard; (see ^{<218D>}Ecclesiastes 5:2). Or restrain thine appetite; deny thyself of some things agreeable, that would lead thee to what might be hurtful, at least if indulged to excess: put as it were a knife unto thine appetite, and mortify it; which is the same as cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye (^{<418D>}Matthew 5:29,30). Or while thou art at such a table, at such a sumptuous entertainment, consider thyself as in danger, as if thou hadst a knife at thy throat; and shouldst thou be too free with the food or liquor, it would be as it were cutting thine own throat;

if thou [be] a man given to appetite; there is then the more danger; and therefore such a person should be doubly on his guard, since he is in the way of temptation to that he is naturally inclined to. Or, “if thou art master of appetite”^{f619}: so the Targum,

“if thou art master of thy soul;”

if thou hast power over it, and the command of it, and canst restrain it with ease; to which agrees the Vulgate Latin version: but the former sense is more agreeable to the Hebrew idiom.

Ver. 3. *Be not desirous of his dainties*, etc.] His savoury food, which is very grateful to the taste, his rich provisions and royal dainties; do not lust after them, as the word^{f620} signifies, in an immoderate way, as the Israelites lusted after the fleshpots in Egypt: these may be lawfully desired, but not sinfully lusted after; and in feeding on them nature may be satisfied, and not the sensual lusts gratified in such a manner they crave, which would be criminal;

for they [are] deceitful meat; or, “bread of lies”^{f621}: through the pleasant and agreeable taste of them, they lead on to luxury and excess before a man is aware, and so deceive him; they promise him a great deal of pleasure, but, being too much indulged to, they produce sickness and nauseousness. Some think they are called so, from the intention and issue of them; being designed to draw out secrets, which men are very apt to divulge, when they have ate and drank freely. Some apply this to false

doctrines, which are framed sometimes in a very plausible manner, and deceive the simple; are bread of lies, lies in hypocrisy, and are very pernicious; such words eat, as do a canker, instead of yielding solid nourishment.

Ver. 4. *Labour not to be rich*, etc.] In an immoderate over anxious way and manner, to a weariness, as the word^{f622} signifies, and even as to gape for breath men ought to labour, that they may have wherewith to support themselves and families, and give to others and: if they can, lay up for their children; but then persons should not toil and weary themselves to heap up riches when they know not who shall gather them and much less make use of indirect and illicit methods to obtain them; resolving to be rich at any rate: rather men should labour for durable riches, lay up treasure in heaven, seek those things which are above, and labour to be accepted of God both here and hereafter; which only is in Christ. The Targum is,

“do not draw nigh to a rich man;”

and so the Syriac version; to which agree the Septuagint and Arabic versions;

cease from thine own wisdom; worldly wisdom in getting; riches, as if this was the highest point of wisdom; do not be always laying schemes, forming projects, inventing new things in order to get money; or do not depend upon thine own wisdom and understanding and expect to be rich by means thereof; for bread is not always to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, (²⁰⁹¹Ecclesiastes 9:11). The Targum is,

“but by thine understanding depart from him;”

the rich man; and to the same purpose the Syriac and Arabic versions.

Ver. 5. *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?* etc.] The Vulgate Latin version is,

“do not lift up thine eyes to riches which thou canst not have;”

riches no doubt are intended, and which may be said to be “not”; they are not the true riches, have only the shadow and appearance of riches; they are not lasting and durable; in a little time they will not be; they are perishing things, they have no substance or solidity in them; they are not satisfying; they do not make them happy; they are rather nonentities than realities; and therefore the eyes of the mind and the affections of the heart

should not be set on them: it may be rendered, “wilt thou cause thine eyes to fly upon that which is not?”^{f623} denoting the intenseness of the mind, and the eagerness of the affections, and with what rapidity and force they move towards them. The Targum is,

“if thou fixest thine eyes on him, he shall not appear to thee;”

meaning the rich man: and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions. Ben Melech makes mention of other senses very different; according to R. Judah, the word signifies darkness, “wilt thou make thine eyes dark?” two according to others, signifies light, “wilt thou make thine eyes to shine?” and, according to Jarchi, “wilt thou double?”, or shut thine eyes?

for [riches] certainly make themselves wings; or, “it in making makes itself wings”^{f624}; even that which is not, on which men cause their eyes to fly; no sooner are their eyes upon that, but that flies away from them like a bird with wings; (see ^{<391>}Hosea 9:11). Either men are taken from that, or that from them, and sometimes very swiftly and suddenly;

they fly away as an eagle towards heaven; the eagle flies very swiftly, none more swiftly; it flies towards heaven, out of sight, and out of reach, and out of call; so riches flee away to God, the original giver of them, from whence they came, and who is the sole disposer of them; they own him as the proprietor and distributor of them; and they flee to heaven as it were for fresh orders where they should be, and into whose hands they should come next; they flee away, so as not to be seen any more, and be recovered by those who have formerly enjoyed them.

Ver. 6. *Eat thou not the bread of [him that hath] an evil eye*, etc.] A sordid covetous man, that grudges every bit that is eaten, in opposition to a man of a good eye, or a bountiful one, that is liberal and generous, (^{<391>}Proverbs 22:9); if he invites to a meal, do not accept of it, sit not down at his table to eat with him:

neither desire thou his dainty meats; or savoury food, so as to lust after it; (see Gill on ^{<391>}Proverbs 23:3”).

Ver. 7. *For as he thinketh in his heart, so [is] he*, etc.] He is not the man his mouth speaks or declares him to be, but what his heart thinks; which is discovered by his looks and actions, and by which he is to be judged of, and not by his words;

eat and drink, saith he to thee, but his heart [is] not with thee; he bids you eat and drink, but he does not desire you should, at least but very sparingly; it is only a mere compliment, not a hearty welcome.

Ver. 8. *The morsel [which] thou hast eaten, shalt thou vomit up*, etc.] It shall turn in thy stomach, thou shall not be able to keep it, when thou understandest thou art not welcome; or thou wilt wish thou hadst never eaten a bit, or that thou couldest vomit up what thou hast; so disagreeable is the thought of being unwelcome, or when this appears to be the case;

and lose thy sweet words; expressed in thankfulness to the master of the feast, in praise of his food, in pleasantry with him, and the other guests at table; all which are repented of when a man finds he is not welcome.

Ver. 9. *Speak not in the ears of a fool*, etc.] For it is only beating the air, and speaking to the wind; it is casting pearls before swine, and that which is holy to dogs. By the “fool” is meant a wicked man, one abandoned to sin, and hardened in it; that scoffs at all admonitions and reproofs, that derides the word, and the preachers of it, and makes a mock at all good men, and everything they say; and therefore what is serious and sacred should not be said to them, since it only becomes the object of their banter and ridicule;

for he will despise the wisdom of thy words; not only the words of doctrine, reproof, and correction, but the “wisdom” of them; or let them be ever so wisely spoken; for if the wisdom of God and his words, the truths of the Gospel, are foolishness with such, and despised by them, then much more the wisdom even of the best of men, and the wisest things they say; yea, when they deliver the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, the Gospel of Christ, which therefore should be spoken among them that are perfect, (~~402~~1 Corinthians 1:24,25 2:6,7).

Ver. 10. *Remove not the old landmark*, etc.] (See Gill on “~~428~~Proverbs 22:28”);

and enter not into the fields of the fatherless; to carry off the increase of them, to reap their wheat, or mow their grass, or turn in cattle to eat it; or to encroach upon them, take in any part of them, or join the whole to their own; for if there is a woe to them that lay field to field, much more to them that enter into and take the fields of the fatherless, and join them to their own, (~~218~~Isaiah 5:8).

Ver. 11. *For their Redeemer [is] mighty*, etc.] As he must needs be, since the Lord of hosts is his name; who sympathizes with them, has mercy on them, is their father, and their friend; (see ^{<267B>}Jeremiah 50:34) (^{<284B>}Hosea 14:3 ^{<298F>}Psalm 68:5);

he shall plead their cause with thee; or “against thee”, as the Vulgate Latin version; and will certainly carry it for them, and against thee; for, when he undertakes a cause, he pleads it thoroughly.

Ver. 12. *Apply thine heart unto instruction*, etc.] To the instruction of parents, and to the instruction of ministers of the word; to the Scriptures, which are profitable to instruction in righteousness; to the instruction of wisdom, or to the Gospel of Christ, which instructs in things relating to him, and to salvation by him: or, “bring in thine heart to instruction”^{f625}; not only bring thy body to the place of instruction, the house of God, but bring thine heart thither also;

and thine ears to the words of knowledge; the doctrines of the Gospel, which are the means of the knowledge of God and Christ, and of all divine, spiritual, and heavenly tidings; and of a growth in the knowledge of them; and therefore should be diligently hearkened and cordially attended to.

Ver. 13. *Withhold not correction from the child*, etc.] When he has committed a fault, and correction is necessary; for to spare it is the ruin of the child, and no proof of true affection in the parent, but the reverse; (see ^{<213B>}Proverbs 13:24 19:18);

for, [if] thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die; if he be beaten moderately, there is no danger of his dying under the rod, or with the stripes given him; besides, such moderate and proper corrections may be a means of preserving him from such crimes as would bring him to a shameful and untimely death, and so he shall not die such a death; and by such means, through the grace of God, he may escape the second, or eternal death.

Ver. 14. *Thou shalt beat him with the rod*, etc.] Or, correct him with the stripes of the children of men, in a moderate and suitable manner, proportionable to the fault committed; and as he is able to bear it, both as to body and mind;

and shalt deliver his soul from hell; be a means of preventing those sins which would bring to hell and destruction; and of bringing to repentance

for those committed; and so of saving his soul, which should be the chief thing parents should have in view in chastising their children; the salvation of whose souls should be dear unto them, as it is to all truly gracious and thoughtful ones.

Ver. 15. *My son, if thine heart be wise*, etc.] To that which is good; so as from it to understand in a spiritual and experimental manner things divine and heavenly; he may be said to have a wise heart who knows in some measure what his heart is, the wickedness, the original depravity and corruption, of it; the plague of his own heart; the weakness and inability of it to do that which is good; the insufficiency of his own righteousness to justify him before God; the poverty of his spirit, and the folly of his mind: and who also is wise unto salvation; that knows the way of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and who applies to him for the same; builds on him, the foundation; prizes and values him; rejoices in him, and gives him the glory of his salvation; receives his doctrines, and obeys his commands; takes up and makes a profession of him on right principles, and walks wisely, becoming his character and profession;

my heart shall rejoice, even mine; it shall certainly and greatly rejoice; these words are spoken either by Solomon, who had a wise heart himself, and that either to his son, for whom he desired the same, nothing being more rejoicing to pious parents than to see their children becomes wise, especially in spiritual things; or else to those that attended on him for instruction, who was a preacher in Jerusalem; and what is the joy and crown of rejoicing of ministers but their converts, and to see them walking in the truth? (~~1~~1 Thessalonians 2:19,20 ~~2~~2 John 1:4) (~~3~~3 John 1:4); or these words are spoken by Wisdom, that is, by Christ, to his children; who rejoices when he has found them, or when they are converted, and become wise in a spiritual sense, and walk worthy, whereby Wisdom is justified of her children, (~~5,6~~5 Luke 15:5,6 ~~19~~19 Matthew 11:19); yea, there is joy in heaven, joy among the angels there, and even in the father of Christ, and of his people, (~~7,10,23,24~~7 Luke 15:7,10,23,24).

Ver. 16. *Yea, my reins shall rejoice*, etc.] Which is only another phrase expressive of the same thing, and confirming the greatness of joy on the above occasion; not only his heart rejoiced, which was affectionately concerned for his son, near which he lay, the desires of which were frequently drawn out for his good, but his reins also; the seat of the

afflictions rejoiced at it; showing how vehement, sincere, and hearty the joy was;

when thy lips speak right things; as they will, when the heart is wise; things agreeably to right reason, to the Scriptures of truth, the oracles of God; to the law and to the testimony; to the Gospel of Christ, and the doctrines of it; and such things as are savoury, pleasant, and profitable, and minister grace to the hearers. The Targum is,

“when my lips speak right things;”

(see ²¹⁸⁶Proverbs 8:6).

Ver. 17. *Let not thine heart envy sinners*, etc.] Their present prosperity and happiness, the pleasure, profit, and honour, they seem to enjoy; all which is but a shadow, fading had temporary; and yet good men are apt to envy it in their hearts, if they do not express it with their lips; and are ready to murmur and think it hard that they should be in straitened circumstances while the wicked are in flourishing ones; and inwardly fret and are uneasy at it, which they should not, (²⁵⁷⁰Psalm 37:1,7 73:2); or do not “emulate” or “imitate”^{f626} them, or do as they do, thinking thereby to enjoy the same prosperity and happiness; choose not their ways, nor desire to be with them, to have their company, or be ranked among them, (²¹⁸³Proverbs 3:31 24:1);

but [be thou] in the fear of the Lord all the day long; let the fear of God be always before thine eyes and in thine heart; be continually in the exercise of fear, which is attended with faith and trust in the Lord; with love and affection to him, and joy and delight in him; be constantly employed in the duties of religion, private and public, which the fear of God includes; and this will be a preservative from envying, murmuring, and fretting at the outward happiness of wicked men; and from joining with them in their evil ways. Aben Ezra, and who is followed by some others, render it, “but [emulate or imitate] the men that fear the Lord all the day long”^{f627}; be followers of them, and do as they do; let their constant piety and devotion stir up a holy emulation in thee to copy after them and exceed them; but the former sense is best.

Ver. 18. *For surely there is an end*, etc.] Both of the prosperity of the wicked, which is but for a short time; and of the afflictions of the righteous, which are but as it were for a moment; and therefore there is no reason to envy the one, nor to be fretful under the other; the end to a good man will

be peace and prosperity for ever: there is a “reward”^{f628}, as some render it here, for the righteous, though not of debt, but of grace; upon which account they have ground to expect much here and hereafter;

and thine expectation shall not be cut off; or “hope”^{f629}; as an hypocrite’s is; for the hope of a saint is well founded upon the person and righteousness of Christ, and is an anchor sure and steadfast; his expectation of grace, and every needful supply of it, while in this life, and of eternal glory and happiness in the world to come, shall not perish; but he shall enjoy what he is hoping, expecting, and waiting for.

Ver. 19. *Hear thou, my son, and be wise*, etc.] Hear the instruction of a father, of the word of Wisdom, of the ministers of the Gospel, which is the way to be wise unto salvation; faith comes by hearing; spiritual wisdom, and an increase of it; the Spirit of God, and his gifts and graces;

and guide thine heart in the way; in the way of the Lord, in the way of wisdom and understanding, in the way of truth and faith, in the way of religious worship, in the way of the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; in all which the heart should be guided and directed, or otherwise it will be of no avail.

Ver. 20. *Be not amongst winebibbers*, etc.] Who drink to excess, otherwise wine may be drank, provided moderation is used; but it is not good to be in company with, excessive drinkers of it, lost a habit of excessive drinking should be acquired;

among riotous eaters of flesh; flesh may be lawfully eaten, but not in a riotous manner, so as to indulge to gluttony and surfeiting; nor should such persons be kept company with that do so, lest their ways should be learned and imitated.

Ver. 21. *For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty*, etc.] They consuming their substance upon their bellies, in eating and drinking; (see ²¹¹⁷Proverbs 21:17);

and drowsiness shall clothe [a man] with rags; excessive eating and drinking brings drowsiness on men, unfits them for business, and makes them idle and slothful; and spending all on their bellies, they have nothing for their backs, and are clothed in rags; (see ²¹³³Proverbs 24:33,34).

Ver. 22. *Hearken unto thy father that begat thee*, etc.] And who has a true and hearty affection for thee, and whatever he says is for thy good and welfare, which he studies and has at heart; and who therefore also has an authority over thee, and what he enjoins ought to be strictly regarded; and, having lived longer in the world, must be thought to have a larger experience and knowledge of things, and therefore should be hearkened unto;

and despise not thy mother when she is old; despise not her counsels, instructions, and advice, though she is old; and because she is so, do not reject them as old wives' fables, or as the silly talk of an old woman, as young men are too apt to do.

Ver. 23. *Buy the truth, and sell [it] not*, etc.] Evangelical truth, the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation, which comes from the God of truth; has Christ, who is the truth, for the stem and substance of it; men are directed and led into it by the Spirit of truth; the whole matter of it is truth; truth, in opposition to the law, that was typical and shadowy; to the errors of false teachers, to everything that is fictitious, or another Gospel; and to that which is a lie, for no lie is of the truth: there are several particular doctrines of the Gospel which are so called; those which respect the knowledge of one God, and three Persons in the Godhead; the deity and sonship of Christ, his incarnation and Messiahship, salvation alone by him, a sinner's justification by his righteousness, and the resurrection of the dead; the whole of which is truth, and is an answer to Pilate's question, (~~John~~ John 18:38); and this men should "buy", not books only, as Aben Ezra interprets it, such as explain and confirm truth, though these should be bought; and especially the Bible, the Scriptures of truth; yet this does not reach the sense of the text: nor is it merely to be understood of persons supporting the Gospel ministry with their purses, by which means truth is preserved, propagated, and continued: no price is set upon it, as being above all; it should be bought or had at any rate, let the expense be what it will: "buying" it supposes a person to have some knowledge of it, of the excellency, usefulness, and importance of it; and shows that he sets a value upon it, and has a high esteem for it: it is to be understood of his using all means and taking great pains to acquire it; such as reading the word, meditating upon it, attending on the public ministry, and fervent and frequent prayer for it, and a greater degree of knowledge of it; yea, it signifies a person's parting with everything for it that is required; as with his former errors he has been brought up in, or has imbibed; with his good

name and reputation, being willing to be accounted a fool or a madman, and an enthusiast, or anything for the sake of it; and even with life itself, when called for; and such a man will strive and contend for it, stand fast in it, and hold it fast, and not let it go, which is meant by “selling” it; truth is not to be sold upon any account, or for any thing whatever; it is not to be slighted and neglected; it should not be parted with neither for the riches, and honours, and pleasures of this life, nor for the sake of a good name among men, nor for the sake of peace, nor for the avoiding of persecution; it should he abode by, and not departed from, though the greater number is against it, and they the riots, the wise, and learned; and though it may be traduced as novel, irrational, and licentious, and be attended with affliction;

[also] wisdom, and instruction, and understanding; that is, buy these also, and sell them no; “wisdom” is to be prized above everything; it is the principal thing, and should be got; all means should he used to obtain it; it may be bought without money; it should be asked of God, who gives it liberally, and, being had, should be held fast: the “instruction” the Scriptures give, the instruction of the Gospel, the instruction of Wisdom, should be valued above gold and silver, and diligently sought after; should be laid fast hold on and not parted with: “understanding” of divine and spiritual things is to be gotten; happy is the man that gets it; and above all gettings this should be got, and all means made rise of to improve and increase it. The Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions, connect these with the word sell only, thus, “buy the truth, and sell not wisdom, and instruction, and understanding”; but as buying and selling both refer to truth, so likewise to these also. The whole verse is wanting in the Septuagint and Arabic versions.

Ver. 24. *The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice*, etc.] Or “in rejoicing shall rejoice”^{f630}, in his son; not that he is rich, but righteous, truly righteous, internally and externally; having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and righteousness and true holiness wrought in him, and so lives soberly, righteously, and godly: this must be understood of a father who is himself righteous; for otherwise wicked men, if their sons do but thrive in the world, they are unconcerned about their character as righteous, or their state and condition God-ward;

and he that begetteth a wise [child] shall have joy of him; especially if he is wise in the best things; if he is wise unto salvation; he may be wise and knowing in things natural, have a good share of wit and sense, and be wise

in worldly things, which may yield a pleasure to a natural man his parent; but, if he is a good man, he will have greater joy of his son if he is wise in the first sense. The mother and grandmother of Timothy had no doubt great joy of him, who, from a child, knew the holy Scriptures; and so had the elect lady of her children, who were walking in the truth; and so has our heavenly Father of his children, who are righteous and wise through his grace.

Ver. 25. *Thy father and thy mother shall be glad*, etc.] That, is when thou art righteous and wise; (see ^{<3000>}Proverbs 10:1); or “let thy father and thy mother be glad”^{f631}; do everything that may make their hearts glad, and their lives easy and comfortable in their old age; by ministering to their necessities, if in any; by treading in their steps, and following their examples; by living soberly and righteously, and behaving wisely; by not only honouring them, but by seeking the honour and glory of God; showing a regard to religion, and supporting it to the utmost of their power; these are things which make the hearts of pious parents glad;

and she that bare thee shall rejoice; thy mother particularly, who bore and brought thee forth with so much pain, and brought thee up with so much care and trouble, will think it an to much recompence for all, if thou art truly wise and religious. Some accommodate this to God our heavenly Father, and to the church, the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all.

Ver. 26. *My son, give me thine heart*, etc.] These words are not the words of Solomon to his son, for a greater than Solomon is here; besides, the claim and possession of the heart do not belong to a creature, but to God; but they are the words of Wisdom, or Christ, to everyone of his sons, the children the Father has given him in covenant; who are adopted through him, regenerated by his Spirit and grace, begotten by his word and ministers as instruments, and born and brought up in his church, and to whom he stands in the relation of the everlasting Father. The heart of a wicked man is little worth, and not worth having; Satan has the possession of it, and fills it, and influences and draws it at his pleasure; the world is set in it, and there is no room for any other; sensual lusts and pleasures, whoredom, wine, and new wine, take away the heart, (^{<3041>}Hosea 4:11); and it is to those this exhortation is opposed, as appears from the following verses; and the sense is, give not thine heart to women, nor to wine, but to me. Christ should have the hearts and affections of his people, and he only; he is to be loved with the whole heart, sincerely, and above all things else;

and it is a good man's heart he desires; a broken and a contrite heart is not despised by him, he binds it up; a heart purified by faith in his blood, a new heart and a new spirit, in which his laws are put and written; a heart to know him, fear him, love him, and believe in him: and as he requites the heart in the exercise of every grace, as faith, fear, and love; so in the performance of, every duty, which, without the heart, is of no avail; as in prayer, singing of praise, and hearing the word, and other religious services. And it is but reasonable service, that Christ should have the hearts of his children, since he stands in such near relations to them; as father, husband, friend, and brother; is all in all unto them; is so lovely a person himself, and has so loved them, and given himself, his life, his blood, his all, for them;

and let thine eyes observe my ways; the ways which Wisdom, or Christ, took in eternity and time, in order to bring about the salvation of his people; his steps in the covenant of grace, as their surety; his coming down from heaven to earth, to do the will of his Father; his going away from hence, by submitting to the accursed death of the cross, thereby making peace and reconciliation for sin; his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, where he ever lives to intercede for us; the various methods of his grace, in calling and visiting his people, supplying their wants, protecting their persons, and preserving them safe to his kingdom and glory: these should be observed, with attention and wonder, to the encouragement of faith, and for the magnifying of the riches of grace: also the ways which he prescribes and directs his children to walk in; as himself, who is the way to the Father, the way of life and salvation; the way of faith in him, the way of truth concerning hath; the way of holiness and righteousness he leads in; the ways of his commandments; the ways in which he himself walked; all which should be observed by the enlightened eyes of the understanding, and be imitated, and copied after, and walked in; respect should be had unto them all; they should be observed and kept, as they are directed to, and in faith and love, without depending on them. Some render the words, "let thine eyes run through my ways"^{f632}: take a thorough and exact view of them. There is a letter transposed in the word rendered "observe", which occasions a different reading; "as is a man's heart, so are his eyes"; if his heart is to Christ, his eyes will be in his ways; and, where Christ's ways are not observed, the heart is not given to him.

Ver. 27. *For a whore [is] a deep ditch*, etc.] Or, "as a deep ditch", so Aben Ezra; to which she may be compared for the filthiness of her

whoredoms, and for her insatiable lust, as well as for her being never satisfied with what she receives from her lovers. Plautus compares^{f633} her to the sea, which devours whatever you give, and yet nothing appears; and another^{f634} calls a whore Charybdis, from her swallowing up and devouring all a man has. She is as a ditch that has no bottom, into which those that fall are ever sinking deeper and deeper, till they get into the bottomless pit; for there is seldom any recovery from this dreadful evil;

and a strange woman [is] a narrow pit; or “well”^{f635}; into which when men fall, they bruise themselves in a terrible manner, by beating from side to side; and out of which they cannot extricate themselves; at least not easily, but with great difficulty, if ever. This may very well be applied to the whore of Rome, and the filthiness of her fornications; and the dreadful state of those who are drawn in to commit fornication with her.

Ver. 28. *She also lieth in wait as [for] a prey*, etc.] At the door of her house, in the corner of the streets, in the dark of the night; laying her snares, and spreading her nets, for unwary persons, to make a prey of their virtue and of their money. Or, “as [a man of] prey”^{f636}; a thief and robber, so Gersom; thus she watches and takes all opportunities to seize on persons, and rob them of their substance, health, and credit; or rather “as [a beast of] prey”; ravenous, devouring, and insatiable; so the Targum,

“as a beast ravening, she lies in wait with her eyes;”

and increaseth the transgressors among men; there is none that occasions wore sin, or makes more sinners, than a whorish woman; swearing, lying, drunkenness, thieving, stealing, housebreaking, robbing on the highway, etc. are the sins she leads into. Or, “increaseth treacherous”^{f637} persons; to God, to their king, to their wives, to their master’s; and all that they may consume, what they can get by perfidious practices, upon them, or,

“perfidious persons among men, she adds “to herself”^{f638},”

she gets a parcel of abandoned wretches about her, whom she employs as her panders for her lust, or as bullies to spoil her gallants of their substance, or murder them for the sake of it.

Ver. 29. *Who hath woe?* etc.] In this world and in the other, in body and soul; diseases of body, distress of mind, waste of substance, and all manner of evils and calamities; if any man has these, the drunkard has: from

whoredom, the Holy Ghost proceeds to drunkenness, which generally go together; and dissuades from it, by observing the mischiefs that come by it;

who hath sorrow? through pains of body, with the headache, etc. or through the agonies of the mind, and tortures of conscience, for sin committed; or through poverty and want, so Aben Ezra derives the word from one that signifies “poor”; and so it may be rendered, “who hath poverty”^{f639}? the drunkard; (see ~~3123~~ Proverbs 23:21);

who hath contentions? quarrels and lawsuits, which often come of drunken bouts;

who hath babbling? or “loquacity”^{f640}? which drunkards are subject to; much vain babbling, foolish talk, scurrilous language, scoffs, jeers, especially at religion and religious men; and sometimes such men are full of talk about religion itself, and make great pretensions to it, and the knowledge of it, in their cups, when out of them they think and talk nothing about it;

who hath wounds without cause? from words, oftentimes, drunkards go to blows upon the most frivolous accounts; fight with one another for no reason at all, and get themselves beaten and bruised for nothing;

who hath redness of eyes? the drunkard has, inflamed with wine or strong drink; which, drank frequently and to excess, is the cause of sore eyes, as well as of weakening the sight; or, however, leaves a redness there, and in other parts of the face, whereby those sons of Bacchus may be known: so it is observed^{f641} of Vitellius the emperor, that his face was commonly red through drunkenness. Hillerus renders it, “blackness of eyes”; such as comes from blows received; taking the word to be of the same signification with the Arabic word **l j k**, which so signifies: this agrees with the preceding clause; and is countenanced by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

Ver. 30. *They that tarry long at the wine*, etc.] At drinking it. Do not care to stir from it when at it; spend whole days and nights in it, and are overcome by it, and so bring upon them all the above evils;

they that go to seek mixed wine, not wine mixed with water, as used commonly by temperate people in hot countries; but either mixed with spices, to make it more palatable, or with different sorts of wine, some very strong, and more heady and intoxicating; or mere wine meant; wine

“poured out”, as the word^{f642} signifies, where there is plenty of it; and such as are given to wine go and seek out such places, and where the best is to be had. So the Targum,

“they go and seek the house of mixture, or mixed wine;”

or, as the Syriac version,

“the house of feasting;”

and so the Arabic:

“where there are junketing and drinking bouts,”

as the Septuagint.

Ver. 31. *Look not thou upon the wine when it is red*, etc.] Or, “because it is red”^{f643}; or shows itself red. Which was the only wine used in the land of Canaan, or, however, the most esteemed of, and that most of art which had the best colour; when it had a good, bright, red colour, or sparkled, and looked bright and beautiful, so the word signifies; and then it should not be looked upon: not that it is unlawful to look upon the colour of wine, and thereby judge of its goodness; but it should not be looked upon with a greedy eye, so as vehemently to desire it, which will lead to an intemperate use of it; just as looking upon a woman, so as to lust after her, is forbidden, (~~4153~~ Matthew 5:28);

when it giveth his colour in the cup: or, its eye in the cup^{f644}; such a bright, brisk, and beautiful colour, as is like a bright and sparkling eye. Here is a various reading; it is written in the text, “in the purse”^{f645}; it is read in the margin, “in the cup”; and Jarchi’s note takes in both,

“he that drinks wine sets his eye on the cup; and the vintner sets his on his purse;”

[when] it moveth itself aright; sparkles in the glass, or goes down the throat pleasantly; or rather looks well to the eye, and appears right and good, and promises a great deal of satisfaction and delight.

Ver. 32. *At the last it biteth like a serpent*, etc.] Though it goes down sweetly, yet it leaves a sting behind it, intemperately drunk; a nausea in the stomach, a stink in the breath, pains and giddiness in the head, weakness in the eyes, trembling in the members of the body, palsy, gout, and other distempers, very painful and grievous to be bore; and, what is worse, if the

conscience is awakened, sharp and cutting reflections there; and, without true repentance, torments intolerable in the world to come;

and stingeth like an adder; or “spreads”^{f646}, or separates and scatters; that is, its poison. So the Vulgate Latin version, “diffuseth poisons as a basilisk”, or “cockatrice”; the Targum and Syriac version,

“as a serpent which flies;”

it signifies the same as before.

Ver. 33. *Thine eyes shall behold strange women*, etc.] Being inflamed with wine, shall look upon women, other men’s wives, and lust after them; or harlots, whom seeking after or meeting with, when in their cups, are drawn into their embraces; excess of wine leads to whoredom^{f647}. So Aben Ezra supplies the word “women”, and Jarchi interprets it to this sense; but the Targum renders it, “strange things”; and so many others: a drunken man, through the lunges and vapours that ascend into his brain, fancies he sees strange sights; he sees things double; imagines that he sees trees walk, and many such like absurd and monstrous things;

and thine heart shall utter perverse things; or the mouth, from the abundance of the heart, and imagination of it, shall utter things contrary to sense and reason, contrary to truth and righteousness, contrary to chastity and good manners, contrary to their own honour and credit, contrary to God and men; the mouth then utters all that is in the heart, which it at other times conceals. It may have a particular respect to the unchaste, filthy, and obscene words, uttered to strange women, into whose company men fall when in liquor.

Ver. 34. *Yea, thou shall be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea*, etc.] Not in the open sea, and the waves of it, there fluctuating and tossed about; nor in an island encompassed by sea; but in a ship at sea, a drunken man reels and tumbles about, just as a ship does at sea; hence the motions and agitations of it, and of the men in it, are compared to the reeling and staggering of a drunken man, (^{Q147B}Psalm 107:26,27);

or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast: where the motion is the greatest. Or all this may be expressive of the dangers which a drunkard is exposed unto, and of his stupidity and insensibility; for though he is in as great danger as one in the circumstances described, in a storm at sea, yet is not sensible of it; which agrees with what follows.

Ver. 35. *They have stricken me, [shalt thou say, and] I was not sick,* etc.] Or “grieved not”^{f648}; or was not wounded or skin broken^{f649}; see (~~248B~~ Jeremiah 5:3). The drunken man is here represented as saying, that though his companions, with whom he quarrelled and fought in his drunken frolics, beat him very much, yet he was not sensible of the pain and smart; and it had left no sickness nor disorder upon him; he did not find himself much the worse for it;

they have beaten me; as with hammers^{f650}; battered and bruised him terribly, laying very hard and heavy strokes upon him;

[and] I felt [it] not; or “knew it not”^{f651}; did not perceive it, was not sensible of it, when the blows were given, or who gave them; and thus feeling no more, and coming off so well, as he thinks, he is so far from being reclaimed from this vice, that he is more strengthened in it, and desirous of it;

when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again: that is, the wine and his boon companions, though he has been so used. So the Vulgate Latin version, “when shall I awake, and again find wines?” being heavy with sleep through intemperance, and yet thirsty, is desirous of shaking off his sleep, that he may get to drinking again, and “add drunkenness to thirst”, (~~192B~~ Deuteronomy 29:19); so the Septuagint version,

“when will it be morning, that going I may seek with whom I may meet?”