

## CHAPTER 24

**Ver. 1.** *Be not thou envious against evil men*, etc.] Or, “men of evil”<sup>f652</sup>. Such who are addicted to evil, and given up to it, whose principles and practices are bad; such as are before described in the preceding chapter; gluttons and drunkards, men given to women and wine: envy not their present prosperity, or seeming pleasure they have in the gratification of their sensual appetites; since woe and sorrow, wounds and strife, now attend them, and poverty and want will follow them; as well as everlasting ruin and destruction will be their portion hereafter; (see Gill on “~~<A1B7>~~Proverbs 23:17”); and compare with this (“~~<A1B2>~~Proverbs 24:21,27,29,32);

*neither desire to be with them*; to be in their company; to have any conversation and fellowship with them, which is very infectious, dangerous, and pernicious; nor even to be in the same state, condition, and circumstances they are in; much less to do as they do, and imitate them in their sinful courses; as you would not choose to be with them in hell hereafter, do not desire to be with them here.

**Ver. 2.** *For their heart studieth destruction*, etc.] To others; to good men, that separate from them, and reprove them, or are in their way; or any ways hinder them in the prosecution of their wicked designs; as Haman’s heart studied the destruction of the Jews: or their hearts study to draw men into their destructive methods of living, and therefore should be shunned and avoided. Moreover, their hearts study destruction to themselves; they study what they shall eat and drink, which they pursue to intemperance; and how they shall compass their lewd designs, and which issue in their ruin; destruction and misery are in all the ways they devise and walk in;

*and their lips talk of mischief*; which they study in their hearts against others; as are their hearts, so are their lips; out of the abundance of the wickedness of their hearts their mouths speak mischievous things; and which, though they design for others, oftentimes fall upon themselves.

**Ver. 3.** *Through wisdom is a house builded*, etc.] A family is built up, furnished and supplied with the necessaries and conveniences of life, and brought into flourishing and prosperous circumstances, by wise and prudent management, by diligence and industry, through the blessing of

God upon them, without taking such methods as evil men do. The house of God, the church of the living God, is built by Wisdom, that is, by Christ; on a good foundation, a rock, upon himself, against which the gates of hell can never prevail; (see <sup><100E></sup>Proverbs 9:1). Every good man's house, himself, his soul, and the eternal salvation of it, are built on the same; and he is a wise man that builds his house through wisdom; that builds on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the one and only foundation which God has laid, which is Jesus Christ;

*and by understanding it is established*; the prosperity of a man's family is continued and secured by his prudent conduct. The church of God is established by Christ, who is understanding as well as wisdom; (see <sup><1084></sup>Proverbs 8:14 <sup><107E></sup>Psalm 87:5); and every true believer is established in Christ, and in the faith of him; and that as he has more and more an understanding of him and of divine things.

**Ver. 4.** *And by knowledge shalt the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*] That are both of worth, value, and usefulness, and for ornament and delight; the more private and retired parts of a man's dwelling house, as well as his shops, warehouses, barns, and granaries, shall be filled with all kind of valuable substance, through his knowledge in improving trade or husbandry, in which he is concerned. This may be understood spiritually, of the fulness which the church has from Christ, and of those unsearchable riches of his she receives from him; and of those treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which the chambers of the soul of a believer are filled with by him; and of all the riches put into them, which are both precious and pleasant; such as precious promises, pleasant doctrines, the valuable truths of the Gospel, and blessings of grace.

**Ver. 5.** *A wise man [is] strong,* etc.] He can do that sometimes by his wisdom, and which requires strength and courage too, which another cannot do by his strength; (see <sup><1072></sup>Proverbs 21:22 <sup><1095></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:15,16). This may be understood of one that is spiritually wise, wise unto salvation, wise for another world, is made to know true wisdom in the hidden part. The Stoic philosophers say much of their wise man; that he is happy, and rich, and mighty, and even a king; all which may be said more truly of a good man; he is strong, not absolutely, but comparatively, in comparison of what he himself was; and wicked men are without strength, and do not seek for any elsewhere; nor do they, nor can they do, that which is spiritually good, and are ignorant of their weakness: but so is not

a wise man; he has some spiritual strength; he seeks to Christ for more, and, through Christ strengthening him, does all things; and is sensible of his own weakness, and finds that when he is weak he is strong: one eminently wise is strong, in comparison of less knowing and more feeble saints; some are children in knowledge, weak in faith and in conduct, more easily drawn into sin and temptation than others; and, in comparison of these, some are strong, who are to bear with and support the weak, and restore them. A wise man is strong, not in and of himself; he cannot think a good thought, nor do a good action, nor preserve himself from sin and Satan; but he is strong in Christ, and in the power of his might, and in his grace; and, through spiritual strength communicated to him, his heart is strengthened, and the work of grace in his heart; he is strengthened to exercise grace more strongly, to perform the duties of religion, to bear the cross of Christ, to withstand temptations, and to oppose his own corruptions. It may be rendered, “a wise man [is] in strength”<sup>f653</sup>; he is in Christ the strong hold, whither, as a prisoner of hope, he has fled and turned into; he is in the strong tower, into which he has run and is safe; he is surrounded with the might and power of God on all sides, by which he is kept;

*yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength*; a spiritual man, a man endued with spiritual knowledge, with the knowledge of Christ, and salvation by him; as he has a degree of spiritual strength, he increases therein; he grows stronger and stronger, he goes from strength to strength; the more he knows of Christ, the more strongly he trusts in him and loves him, and the more able he is to resist Satan’s temptations; and is a better match for false teachers who deceive the hearts of the simple: spiritual strength is increased by means of the word of God, by the promises of the Gospel, and by the ordinances of it.

**Ver. 6.** *For by wise counsel thou shall make thy war*, etc.] Counsel, as well as strength, is necessary for war: kings and states, before they enter on a war, should not only well consider the justness of their cause, but should consult whether they have a sufficiency of men and money to carry it on; and should concert the wisest methods to attack the enemy, or defend themselves; and, above all, should ask counsel of God; (see <sup><12831></sup>2 Kings 18:20 <sup><2161></sup>Luke 14:31,32). And this is true of our spiritual warfare with sin, Satan, the world, and false teachers; which requires not only strength to wage war with them, but wise counsel, that we may be able to understand and guard against their cunning, wiles, and stratagems: and this is

principally to be asked of God, who is wonderful in counsel; and of good and experienced men, skilled in those matters;

*and in the multitude of counsellors [there is] safety*; to take the advice of wise counsellors, and many of them, even among men, is safe for princes and states, in the above case and in all others; and especially to ask and take counsel of God, who gives wisdom liberally to them that ask it; and of Christ, the wonderful Counsellor; and from the Scriptures, whom David made his counsellors; and from old experienced Christians, and ministers of the word, with whom are wisdom, counsel, and understanding; (see Gill on <sup><4014></sup>Proverbs 11:14”).

**Ver. 7.** *Wisdom [is] too high for a fool*, etc.] It is out of his reach, he cannot attain it; natural wisdom, or the knowledge of many things in nature; at least it seems so to himself, and therefore will not take any pains, or make use of any means, to obtain it; as the knowledge of human laws; of medicine, of philosophy, of languages, or of any of the liberal arts and sciences; or he has not really a capacity for it. This is more especially true of spiritual wisdom, or of the knowledge of divine things in a spiritual way; or of the things Of the Spirit of God, which a natural man cannot know, because they are spiritually discerned; it is God only makes men to know this kind of wisdom in the hidden part, (<sup><4024></sup>1 Corinthians 2:14 <sup><4506></sup>Psalms 51:6); for as a “fool” here denotes a wicked man, let his natural parts be what they will; so wisdom spiritual knowledge, and experience of divine things, which is too high for an unregenerate man to reach; see a like phrase in (<sup><4006></sup>Psalms 139:6);

*he openeth not his mouth in the gate*; he is not qualified for it; and if he has any knowledge of himself, he will not venture to speak in a public assembly, in the house of parliament, in a court of judicature, or in the company of men of knowledge and sense; and indeed it is his highest wisdom to keep silence, and not betray his ignorance: and so with regard to spiritual things; a man that wisdom is too high for, and he has no share of it, shall not or ought not to open his mouth where Wisdom cries; even in the gates of the cities, or in the public assemblies of the saints, (<sup><4002></sup>Proverbs 1:21 8:3).

**Ver. 8.** *He that deviseth to do evil shall be called a mischievous person*] To do evil is natural to men, all are prone to it; being conceived and born in sin, and, from the womb, more or less commit it: but for a man to sit down and contrive evil, as some men are inventors of evil things; contrive new

sins, or at least new methods of sinning, such as new oaths, new games, new ways of tricking and deceiving men; and are always studying and devising ways and means of committing sin, and doing that which is evil in the sight of God and men. Such a man, with great propriety, may be called, and will be called by those that know him, a mischievous man, a very pernicious one, and to be shunned and avoided as such; men will reckon him and call him a “master” or “author”<sup>f654</sup> of evil devices”, as it may be rendered; a name agreeable to his character.

**Ver. 9.** *The thoughts of foolishness [is] sin*, etc.] The thought of sin is sin<sup>f655</sup>, before it comes into action; the motions of sin in the mind, the workings of corrupt nature in the heart, the sinful desires of the flesh and of the mind: these are forbidden and condemned by the law of God as sin, which says, “Thou shall not covet”, (~~(1217)~~ Exodus 20:17), and stand in need of pardoning grace and mercy; (see ~~(8175)~~ Romans 7:5,7 ~~(482)~~ Acts 8:22). Or, “the thoughts of a foolish man are sin”<sup>f656</sup>; that is, of a wicked man; in all whose thoughts God is not, but sin is; the imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil, and that continually; he thinks of nothing else but sin, (~~(1015)~~ Genesis 6:5);

*and the scorner [is] an abomination to men*; who not only thinks ill of divine things, and despises them in his heart, which is only known to God; but scoffs at them with his lips, makes a jest of all that is good, derides religion and religious men; and to such he is an abomination: and indeed one that is proud and haughty, scorner is his name, and that deals in proud wrath, and scorns all around him, in whatsoever company he comes, and that ridicules every person, and every thing that is said in conversation, is usually hated and abhorred by all sorts of men.

**Ver. 10.** *[If] thou faint in the day of adversity*, etc.] When under bodily afflictions, stripping providences, reduced to great straits and wants; or under the violent persecutions of men, which is sometimes the case of the people of God; whose times are in his hands, times of adversity, as well as prosperity; and which are appointed by him, when they shall come, and how long they shall last; which is but for a short time, it is but a “day”, and yet they are apt to “faint” under them, through the number and continuance of their afflictions; and especially when they apprehend them to be in wrath; when they have a sense of their sins at such a time, and no view of pardon; when they are under the hidings of God’s face, their prayers do not seem to be heard, and salvation and deliverance do not come so soon as

they expected; which, notwithstanding, shows the truth of what is next observed;

*thy strength [is] small*; such who are truly gracious are not indeed at such times wholly without strength; they are in some measure helped to bear up; but yet their sinkings and faintings show that they have but little strength: they have some faith that does not entirely fail, Christ praying for it; yet they are but of little faith; they have but a small degree of Christian fortitude and courage; there is a want of manliness in them; they act the part of children and babes in Christ; they do not quit themselves like men, and much less endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ, as they should; they are, Ephraim like, without a heart, a courageous one, (<sup><300></sup>Hosea 7:1). Some think the words have reference to what goes before, and the sense to be this, “if thou art remiss”,<sup>f657</sup>; that is, if thou art careless and negligent in time of health and prosperity, in getting wisdom, as thinking it too high for thee, (<sup><301></sup>Proverbs 24:7); “in the day of adversity thy strength [will be] small”; thou wilt not have that to support thee which otherwise thou wouldest have had. Aben Ezra connects the sense with the following, “if thou art remiss”, in helping and delivering thy friend in affliction, (<sup><302></sup>Proverbs 24:11,12); “in the day of adversity”, or “of straitness, thy strength shall be strait”; thou shalt be left in thy distress and difficulties, and have none to help thee.

**Ver. 11.** *If thou forbear to deliver [them that are] drawn unto death*, etc.] Or “taken for or unto death”<sup>f658</sup>, in a violent way; who are taken by thieves and robbers, and used in a barbarous manner, as the man in the parable, whom the priest and Levite took no notice of, and was helped by the good Samaritan; or who are unjustly sentenced and appointed to death by the civil magistrate; if any know their innocency, it becomes them to do all they can to save their lives, by bearing a testimony for them; for “a true witness delivereth souls”, (<sup><303></sup>Proverbs 14:25); or by interceding for them, and giving counsel and advice concerning them, or by any lawful way they can; as Reuben delivered Joseph, Jonathan interceded for David, and Ahikam and Ebedmelech for Jeremiah. Life is valuable, and all means should be taken to save it, and to prevent the shedding of innocent blood; and a man should not forbear or spare any cost, or pains, or time, to such service: likewise such as are drawn into snares and temptations, into immorality or heresy, which tend to the ruin of the souls of men, and bring them to eternal death; all proper, methods should be taken to restore such persons, to recover them out of the snare of the devil, which is saving souls

from death, and covering a multitude of sins; (see <sup><sup>S125</sup> 2 Timothy 2:25,26)  
(<sup><sup>S159</sup> James 5:19,20);</sup></sup>

*and [those that are] ready to be slain*; or <sup>f659</sup> “bending to slaughter”; are within a little of being executed, or put to death, upon a false accusation; for about others that suffer righteously there need not be that concern here pressed, or whose works and ways incline to destruction and lead to it, of which they seem not very far off.

**Ver. 12.** *If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not*, etc.] The danger the person was in; or the innocency of his cause; or what method to take to deliver him; or that it was in our power to do anything for him; so the Vulgate Latin version, “if thou sayest, strength is not sufficient”: or “we knew him not”<sup>f660</sup>, who he was or what he was; had no knowledge of him, or acquaintance with him, and so did not think ourselves under any obligation to regard his case; such excuses will not do;

*doth not he that pondereth the heart consider [it]*? he that searches the heart and tries it, and weighs every thought of it, and excuse it makes, considers and understands whether it is a mere excuse or not; though such excuses may appear plausible to men, yet to God that knows the heart they are of no avail; for he knows it to be a mere shift, and that it was unwillingness to help the distressed, and a neglect of their case; and that all that is said on their own behalf is a vain pretence;

*and he that keepeth thy soul, doth [not] he know [it]*? he that upholds it in life, and whose visitation preserves it, and therefore should be careful of the life of another; and if not, may justly fear the Lord will withdraw his care and preservation of them; he knows perfectly well what regard a man has to the welfare of another, or to the preservation of another man’s life when in danger; and whether what he says on his own behalf is well founded: or “he that observeth thy soul”<sup>f661</sup>; all the inward motions of it, the thoughts, affections, purposes, and inclinations; he knows whether what is said is true or not;

*and shall [not] he render to [every] man according to his works*? and behave towards him according to the law of retaliation; the same measure he measures to others, he will measure to him again; and who having shown no mercy in saving the lives of others, when he could have done it, shall have judgment executed on him without mercy, when he is in distress.



**Ver. 13.** *My son, eat thou honey, because [it is] good,* etc.] It is good for food; there was plenty of it in Palestine, and it was eaten for food, not only by children, but grown persons; and was very nourishing, strengthening, and refreshing to them, as Samson, Jonathan, John the Baptist, and others; and is good for medicine, is healthful and salutary, and useful in many diseases: it is said<sup>f662</sup> to conduce much to prolong life and preserve from diseases; it has been observed that those who have much used it have lived to a great age;

*and the honeycomb, [which is] sweet to thy taste;* because it is so, as all honey is, and especially that which is immediately squeezed or drops from the honeycomb; this is said not so much on account of honey, and the eating of that, as for what follows concerning the knowledge of wisdom, which is comparable to it for pleasure and profit; see (<sup><1062></sup>Proverbs 16:24 <sup><0911></sup>Psalm 19:11 119:103)<sup>f663</sup>.

**Ver. 14.** *So [shall] the knowledge of wisdom [be] unto thy soul,* etc.] Or let it be taken in as greedily and with as good an appetite; as pleasant, useful, delightful, and profitable; even the knowledge of Christ, the Wisdom of God, which is preferable to all things else, and more desirable than the most pleasant and profitable things in the world; and of the Gospel of Christ, the wisdom of God in a mystery, than which nothing is more sweet and comfortable to a truly gracious soul; it is like Ezekiel's roll, which was in his mouth as honey for sweetness, (<sup><1078></sup>Ezekiel 3:3);

*when thou hast found [it], then there shall be a reward;* for though there may be some difficulty and trouble to attain it, in the use of means, by reading, bearing, prayer, and meditation, yet, being enjoyed, it carries its own reward with it; a man is abundantly recompensed for all his pains in the pursuit of it, by the pleasure and profit it yields him now and hereafter; for it is the beginning of life eternal, and will issue in it, (<sup><1078></sup>John 17:3); (see <sup><1018></sup>Proverbs 2:3-5 3:13);

*and thy expectation shall not be cut off;* or "hope"<sup>f664</sup>; as the hope of the hypocrite will, (<sup><1084></sup>Job 8:14), the hope of eternal life, as founded on Christ and his righteousness, where such that know Wisdom place their hope; and this hope will not make them ashamed; they will not be disappointed, their expectation shall not perish, they will have what they are waiting and hoping for, and what is promised unto them, (see Gill on "<sup><1038></sup>Proverbs 23:18"). The Targum is,



“which if thou findest, the last shall come better than the first, and thy hope shall not be consumed.”

**Ver. 15.** *Lay not wait, O wicked [man], against the dwelling of the righteous*, etc.] The church of God, which is the righteous man’s dwelling place, and where he desires and delights to dwell; or his own dwelling house; it may be rendered, “at the dwelling of the righteous”<sup>f665</sup>; lay not wait at his door to observe who goes in and out, and what is done there; and to watch for his halting, and take notice of his infirmities, slips, and falls, and improve them to his disadvantage; and so the Vulgate Latin version, “and lay not wait and seek ungodliness in the house of the righteous”; or lay not wait there for him, as Saul set men to watch the house of David to kill him, (<sup><0911></sup>1 Samuel 19:11); or to take an opportunity and get into it and plunder it, as follows;

*spoil not his resting place*: by pulling it down, or stripping it of its furniture; by robbing him of the substance in it, and thus disturbing his rest, and destroying the place of it; or the place where he lies down as a sheep in its fold, or as the shepherd in his cottage, of which the words in the text are used; and so denote that as the righteous man is like a sheep, harmless and innocent, those that lay in wait for him and spoil him are no other than wolves.

**Ver. 16.** *For a just [man] falleth seven times, and riseth up [again]*, etc.] This is to be understood of a truly just man; not of one that is only outwardly and seemingly so, or of temporary believers and nominal professors; but of such who are thoroughly convinced of their own unrighteousness, and believe in Christ for righteousness, and have it applied and imputed to them; as well as have principles of grace and righteousness implanted in them, and live righteously in this evil world; these often fall either into troubles or into sins, and indeed into both, and the one is the cause of the other; and both senses may be retained: the former seems more agreeable to the context, and runs thus, lay not wait to a just man’s dwelling to do him any hurt; for though he should be ensnared, and stumble, and fall into distress and calamity, yet he will rise again out of it, and so all attempts upon him are vain and fruitless; many are the righteous man’s afflictions he falls into, but the Lord delivers out of all; he delivers him in six troubles, and even in seven, (<sup><1349></sup>Psalm 34:19 <sup><1659></sup>Job 5:19); or in many, one after another; he rises out of them all; he comes out of great tribulations, and at last safely enters the kingdom of heaven; and

therefore it is to no purpose to lie in wait for him: and this sense is strengthened by the words following, “rejoice not when thine enemy falleth”, (<sup>(2147)</sup>Proverbs 24:17); but the latter sense of falling into sin has been anciently received, and not to be rejected; and which generally precedes and is the cause of falling into trouble. A just man, though he does not fall from his righteousness, which is an everlasting one, nor from the grace of God; yet he may fall into temptation, and by it he may fall into sin, as every just man does; “for there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not”, (<sup>(2072)</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:20); and that frequently, even every day; and therefore stands every day in need of fresh application of pardoning grace, for which he is directed to pray daily; and he may be left to fall foully into very gross sins, as David, Peter, and others; but not totally and finally, so as to perish; being on the heart of God, in the hands of Christ, on him the foundation, united to him, and kept by the power of God, he shall and does rise again sooner or later; not by his own power and strength, but by the strength of the Lord; he rises by renewed repentance, and under the fresh discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy to heal his backslidings;

*but the wicked shall fall into mischief*; or “evil”<sup>f666</sup>; into the evil of sin, and there lie and wallow in it, as the swine in the mire, and never rise out of it; and into the evil of punishment, into hell itself, from whence there will be no deliverance; and oftentimes they fall into mischief in this world, into trouble and distress, into poverty and want, in which they live and die, and never recover out of it; to which agrees what follows.

**Ver. 17.** *Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth*, etc.] These words are spoken not to the wicked man, (<sup>(2145)</sup>Proverbs 24:15); but to the just man, or Solomon’s son, or the children of Wisdom; for by the “enemy” is meant such who are at enmity with the people of God, as the seed of the serpent, and those after the flesh, are: and when these “fall”, saints should not “rejoice”; as when they fall into sin; for so to do would be to act as wicked “charity [which] rejoiceth not in iniquity”, (<sup>(4636)</sup>1 Corinthians 13:6): or rather when they fall into calamity and distress; for this is also the part which wicked men act towards the people of God, and should not be imitated in; (see Obidiah 1:12 <sup>(3708)</sup>Micah 7:8 <sup>(6110)</sup>Revelation 11:10). Joy may be expressed at the fall of the public enemies of God and his people, as was by the Israelites at the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, (<sup>(2151)</sup>Exodus 15:1); and as will be by the church at the destruction of antichrist, and which they are called upon to do, (<sup>(6880)</sup>Revelation 18:20 19:1,2); partly on

account of their own deliverance and safety, and chiefly because of the glory of God, and of his justice displayed therein; see (<sup><1880></sup>Psalm 58:10); but as private revenge is not to be sought, nor acted, so joy at the calamity and ruin of a private enemy, or a man's own enemy, should not be expressed; but rather he is to be pitied and helped; see (<sup><1871></sup>Proverbs 25:21,22); for to love an enemy, and show regard to him, is the doctrine both of the Old and of the New Testament;

*and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth*; even secret joy should not be indulged, gladness in the heart, though it does not appear in the countenance, and is not expressed in words; no, not at the least appearance of mischief, when he only stumbles and is ready to fall; and much less should there be exultation and rejoicings made in an open manner at the utter ruin of him.

**Ver. 18.** *Lest the Lord see [it], and it displease him*, etc.] Who sees all things, not only external actions, but the heart, and the inward motions of it; and though men may hide the pleasure they feel at the misery of an enemy from others, they cannot hide it from the Lord; nor is this said by way of doubt, but as a certain thing; and which the Lord not barely sees, but takes notice of, and to such a degree as to resent it, and show his displeasure at it by taking the following step;

*and he turn away his wrath from him*; remove the effects of it, raise him out of his fallen and distressed condition, and restore him to his former prosperous one; and not only so, but turn it upon thee, as Gersom supplies the words, and not amiss; so that there is a strange and sudden change of circumstances; thou that was pleasing thyself with the distress of thine enemy art fallen into the same, and he is delivered out of it; which must be a double affliction to such a man; so that by rejoicing at an enemy, he is doing his enemy good and himself hurt; (see <sup><1876></sup>Proverbs 17:5).

**Ver. 19.** *Fret not thyself because of evil [men]*, etc.] Because of their outward prosperity and worldly happiness, any more than rejoice at their adversity; neither do the one nor the other; where the one prevails, the other does also; by the frequent repetition of this advice, it looks as if this evil is what good men are prone to, and which was very common in Solomon's time, and in the time of his father David, from whom he seems to have borrowed these words, (<sup><1870></sup>Psalm 37:1,7); (see <sup><1877></sup>Proverbs 23:17 24:1);

*neither be thou envious at the wicked*; though they may stand when thou fallest, or be in prosperity when thou art in adversity; the reasons follow.

**Ver. 20.** *For there shall be no reward to the evil [man]*, etc.] No reward of good things, such as is for the righteous in a way of grace; but he shall have a reward of evil things, a just recompence of reward for his sins: of “no end”<sup>f667</sup>; there will be an end of his life in this world, and there will be an end of his prosperity; but, as the Targum is, there will be no “good end” to him; his end will not be like that of the perfect and upright man, for it will be cut off, (<sup>13757</sup>Psalm 37:37,38); or, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “the wicked have no hope of future things”; no good hope of everlasting happiness; they have their good things now, and their evil things hereafter; and therefore are not to be fretted at and envied. Aben Ezra interprets it, they shall have no offspring or issue, son or nephew; the word is sometimes used for posterity;

*the candle of the wicked shall be put out*; meaning not the dim light of nature in them, nor the light of life before their time, so Aben Ezra; but their prosperity, riches, splendour, and glory, which candle is often put out while they live, and always at death; after which they have no more light, honour, and happiness; even not so much as the light of a candle, to which their prosperity in this life is compared, it being at best but small, and of a short continuance; see (<sup>13815</sup>Job 18:5,6 21:17); and therefore should not be the object of the envy of good men, who are in a more happy and stable condition than they.

**Ver. 21.** *My son, fear thou the Lord, and the king*, etc.] First the Lord, and then the king; and such as fear the Lord are generally loyal to their king; the fear of God includes love to him, reverence of him, faith in him, submission to him, and the whole worship of him, inward and outward, attended with holiness of life and conversation: and the king, who is under God, is to be feared also, with a fear suitable to him; he is to be loved and revered, to be trusted in and submitted to, in everything consistent with the fear of God and obedience to him; in whatever is not contrary to his laws, commands, and ordinances; (see <sup>1123</sup>1 Peter 2:13-17);

*[and] meddle not with them that are given to change*; in political things; that are for new laws, new forms of government, a new ministry, and a new king; never easy with the government under which they are, but are continually entering into plots, conspiracies, and rebellions, who, instead of fearing God and the king, change the laws and commandments of God and

the king, and therefore to be shunned. Some render it, “with rebels”; the Targum and Syriac version, “with fools”; as all such persons are, and should be avoided as scandalous and dangerous: mix not with them, as the word <sup>f668</sup> signifies; keep no company, and have no conversation with them, lest you be brought into danger and mischief by them. Or who are given to change in religious things; make innovations in doctrine and practice, always love to hear or say some new thing; turn with every wind, and shift as that does; are tossed about with every wind of doctrine, fickle and inconstant, carried about like meteors in the air, with “divers and strange doctrines”; such as disagree with the perfections of God, the doctrines of Christ and his apostles, the Scriptures of truth, the analogy of faith, anti form of sound words; and so the word here used signifies “divers”, and is so rendered (~~EST~~ Esther 3:8); and may design such who hold doctrines and give into practices divers and different from the faith once delivered to the saints, and from the institutions and appointments of Christ; innovations in doctrine and worship ought not to be admitted of; and such who are for introducing them should not be meddled or mixed with; they should not be countenanced and encouraged; they should not be attended upon or given heed unto; have no fellowship, and join not in communion with them. This is interpreted by some of such who repeat <sup>f669</sup> their sins after repentance, or who return a second time to their wickedness after they have repented, as Ben Melech observes.

**Ver. 22.** *For their calamity shall rise suddenly*, etc.] And come upon those that fear not God, and rebel against the king and the state, and innovate in matters of religion; and especially that bring in damnable heresies, and, while they cry Peace, peace, and are pleasing themselves with their new schemes and prosperous success, swift and sudden destruction comes upon them, (~~GOD~~ 2 Peter 2:1 ~~EST~~ 1 Thessalonians 5:3);

*and who knoweth the ruin of them both?* of those that fear not the Lord, nor the king; or of those who are given to change, and innovate in things civil and religious; and of those who meddle with them and join themselves to them: the ruin of themselves and families, in a civil sense, is great and inexpressible, who rebel against their prince, and endeavour to change and subvert the present government; and the ruin of the souls of men, both of the deceivers and the deceived, is beyond all conception and expression.

**Ver. 23.** *These [things] also [belong] to the wise*, etc.] Both what is said before concerning fearing God and the king; these belong to the wise and

unwise, rich and poor, great and small; particularly judges and civil magistrates, and all subordinate governors, who have, or ought to have, a competency of wisdom; these ought to fear God and the king, as well as private subjects; and also what follows after, especially in this verse and (<sup><2224></sup>Proverbs 24:24-26). Some render the words, “these things also [are the sayings] of wise men”<sup><670></sup>; not of Solomon, but of other wise men in his time, or who lived after him, and before the men of Hezekiah copied out the proverbs in the following chapters; (see <sup><2251></sup>Proverbs 25:1); but it seems more than probable that what follows to the end of the chapter are the words of Solomon, as (<sup><2243></sup>Proverbs 24:33,34) most clearly are, compared with (<sup><2160></sup>Proverbs 6:10, 11);

*[it is] not good to have respect of persons in judgment*; in trying causes in a court of judicature, no regard should be had to the persons of men by the judge on the bench, as the rich more than to the poor; or to a relation, a friend, an intimate acquaintance, more than to a stranger; but the justice of the cause ought to be attended to, and sentence given according to it, let it fall as it will: God does not accept persons, nor regard the rich more than the poor; nor should they that stand in his stead, and who in some sense represent him, (<sup><2295></sup>Leviticus 19:15) (<sup><2207></sup>Deuteronomy 1:17 <sup><2249></sup>Job 34:19); nor should Christians in their communities act such a partial part, (<sup><2111></sup>James 2:1-3).

**Ver. 24.** *He that saith unto the wicked, Thou [art] righteous*, etc.] Not in a private way, or as giving his opinion or character of a man that is wicked, whom either through ignorance or flattery another may call righteous; which may be done and not resented by people and nations; but in an open court of judicature pronounced by the judge, justifying the wicked for reward, and condemning the just, which is an abomination unto the Lord; (see <sup><2175></sup>Proverbs 17:15 <sup><2123></sup>Isaiah 5:23); nor should the ministers of the Gospel flatter the wicked, and call them righteous and good men, and strengthen their hands in their wickedness, promising them life though they continue in their evil ways; for though God justifies the ungodly, man should not; nor does he justify them in, but from, their ungodliness; (see <sup><2132></sup>Ezekiel 13:2);

*him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him*; the people of the land shall curse him as an unjust judge, as a patron of wickedness and wicked men; as an enemy to justice, and a discourager of truth and honesty, and all good men; and even nations that have not so immediate a concern in the

affair, yet hearing of it shall express their indignation at him and abhorrence of him.

**Ver. 25.** *But to them that rebuke [him] shall be delight*, etc.] That is, such that rebuke in the gate, or openly, in a court of judicature; that reprove delinquents, such as are found guilty of malpractices, and punish them as they ought to be, according to the laws of God and man; they shall have delight in themselves, peace and pleasure in their own minds; or the people shall delight in them, and speak well of them, and think themselves happy under such a just administration; or the Lord shall delight in them, the beauty or sweetness of the Lord shall come unto them, as Aben Ezra explains it; the Lord shall be sweet and delightful to them, and they shall have pleasure in him;

*and a good blessing shall come upon them*; or “a blessing of good”<sup>f671</sup>; a blessing of good things, temporal and spiritual, here and hereafter; the blessing of a good God, and a blessing from him; and a blessing of good men, as opposed to the curse of the people in (<sup><1024></sup>Proverbs 24:24).

**Ver. 26.** *[Every man] shall kiss [his] lips that giveth a right answer.*] Either as a witness to a question put to him in court, to which he answers aptly and uprightly; or rather as a judge, who, having heard a cause, answers and gives his opinion of it faithfully, and pronounces a righteous sentence; everyone will love and respect him, and hearken to him and obey him; both affection and obedience are signified by a kiss; (see <sup><1022></sup>Psalm 2:12 <sup><201></sup>Song of Solomon 8:1).

**Ver. 27.** *Prepare thy work without*, etc.] As Solomon did for the building of the temple; timber and stones were prepared, hewed, squared, and fitted for the building before brought thither, (<sup><1058></sup>1 Kings 5:18 6:7); or diligently attend to thy business without doors, whatever it is, that thou mayest provide for thyself and family the necessaries and conveniences of life, which are in the first place to be sought after;

*and make it fit for thyself in the field*; let nothing be wanting in managing the affairs of husbandry, in tilling the land, in ploughing and sowing, and reaping, and gathering in the increase, that there may be a sufficiency for the support of the family;

*and afterwards build thine house*; when, though the blessing of God upon thy diligence and industry, thou art become rich, or however hast such a competent substance as to be able to build a good house, and furnish it in a



handsome manner, then do it; but first take care of the main point, that you have a sufficiency to finish it; see the advice of Christ, (<sup><4148></sup>Luke 14:28,29); necessaries are first to be sought after, before things ornamental and superfluous; first take care to live, and then, if you can, build a fine house. Jarchi interprets this of a man's first getting fields, vineyards, and cattle, something beforehand in the world, and then take a wife, when he is able to maintain her, whereby his house may be built up; (see <sup><4041></sup>Ruth 4:11).

**Ver. 28.** *Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause*, etc.]

Unless forced unto it, except there is some urgent reason for it; not upon any trivial account, or in any frivolous matter; never appear forward and eager to bear witness against him, and, whenever obliged to it, be not a false witness, but speak truth, whether thy neighbour be a friend or a foe;

*and deceive [not] with thy lips*; by bearing a false testimony, the judge, thy neighbour and thyself; for though men may be deceived, God cannot: or, shouldest thou do so, "thou wouldest break" and cut him to pieces "with thy lips"<sup><672></sup>; which is the sense of the words according to R. Judah, as Ben Melech relates.

**Ver. 29.** *Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me*, etc.] He has falsely accused and reproached me, and bore a false testimony, or suborned false witnesses against me, and I will do the same to him, now an opportunity serves; but as private revenge itself is sinful, so especially when it is pursued in a wicked way;

*I will render to the man according to his work*; this should be left to the Lord, whose prerogative it is; (see <sup><1249></sup>Proverbs 24:19 <sup><6129></sup>Romans 12:19).

**Ver. 30.** *I went by the field of the slothful*, etc.] This very probably was a real matter of fact; King Solomon's way lay at a certain time by the field of a slothful man, who never went into it himself, there being a lion in the way; and which he took no care of to manure and till, to plough and sow, but let it lie waste and uncultivated; an emblem of a carnal and worldly professor, and especially an unregenerate man, neglecting the affairs of his soul, his heart remaining like the fallow field unopened and unbroken, hard, obdurate, and impenitent; nothing sown in it, no seed of grace; nor has the seed of the word any place in it, but falling on it lies like seed by the wayside, caught up by every bird;

*and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding*; as the slothful man is, that takes no care to plant and dress it, that it may bring forth fruit to his

own profit and advantage; and as every unregenerate man is, who is unconcerned about his soul, and the welfare of it; whatever understanding he may have of things natural and civil, he has no knowledge of spiritual things, of God in Christ, of himself, his state and condition; of Christ, and the way of peace, life, and salvation by him; of the Spirit, and his work of grace upon the heart; and of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; and so has no regard to the vineyard of his soul, and the plantation and fruitfulness of it; see (<sup>2006</sup>Song of Solomon 1:6).

**Ver. 31.** *And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns*, etc.] Or “thistles”<sup>f673</sup>; which grow up of themselves, are the fruit of the curse, and the effect of slothfulness;

*[and] nettles had covered the face thereof*; so that nothing was to be seen but thorns and thistles, nettles and weeds; and such is the case of the souls of men when neglected, and no concern is had for them; so it is with carnal and worldly professors, who are overrun with the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things, comparable to thorns and nettles for their piercing and stinging nature, and the unfruitfulness and unprofitableness of them; such are the thorny ground hearers, (<sup>4132</sup>Matthew 13:22); and such is the case of all unregenerate persons, whose souls are like an uncultivated field, and a neglected vineyard; in which grow naturally the weeds of sin and corruption, comparable to thorns and nettles for their spontaneous production, for the number of them, for their unfruitfulness, and for the pain and distress they bring when conscience is awakened; and because as such ground that bears thorns and nettles is nigh to cursing, and its end to be burned, which is their case; (see <sup>3078</sup>Hebrews 6:8);

*and the stone wall thereof was broken down*; the fence about the fields, the wall about the vineyard, to keep out men and beasts; (see <sup>2070</sup>Isaiah 5:2); which through slothfulness, and want of repair and keeping up, fell to decay, (<sup>2108</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:18); and thus carnal professors and unregenerate men, having no guard upon themselves, are open and exposed to every sin, snare, and temptation; Satan has free egress and regress; the evil spirit can go out and come in when he pleases, and bring seven evil spirits more wicked than himself: indeed such is the evil heart of man that it needs no tempter; he is drawn aside of his own lust, and enticed; he is liable to every sin, and to fall into the utmost ruin; he has nothing to protect and defend him; not the Spirit, nor grace, nor power of God.

**Ver. 32.** *Then I saw, [and] considered it well*, etc.] Or, “when I saw, I considered it well”; or “set my heart it”<sup>f674</sup>; when he saw as he passed along the field and the vineyard, he, considered who was the owner and proprietor of them; what a sluggish and foolish man he was, and what a ruinous condition his field and vineyard were in.

*I looked upon [it, and] received instruction*; looked at it again, and took a thorough view of it, and learned something from it; so great and wise a man as Solomon received instruction from the field and vineyard of the slothful and foolish man; learned to be wiser, and to be more diligent in cultivating his own field, and dressing his own vineyard: so from the view and consideration of the slothfulness and folly of unregenerate man, and of the state and condition of his soul, many lessons of instruction may be learned; as that there is no free will and wisdom in men with respect to that which is good; the ruinous state and condition of men, as being all overspread with sin and corruption, in all the powers and faculties of their souls; and that there is nothing in them agreeable to God, but all the reverse; also the necessity of divine grace to put them into a good state, and make them fruitful; moreover, the distinguishing grace of God, which makes others to differ from them; and likewise it is teaching and instructive to good men to use more diligence themselves in things relating to their spiritual good, and to the glory of God.

**Ver. 33.** *[Yet] a little sleep, a little slumber*, etc.] The sight of the field and vineyard of the slothful put Solomon in mind of an observation he had made before, which fitly describes the disposition and gesture of the sluggard, by which means his field and vineyard came to ruin; while he should be up and tilling his field and planting his vineyard, he is in his bed; and awaking, instead of rising, craves for and indulges himself in another little doze, and which he repeats again and again;

*a little folding of the hands to sleep*; which ought to have been employed another way; (see Gill on “<sup>2180</sup>Proverbs 6:10”).

**Ver. 34.** *So shall thy poverty come [as] one that travelleth*, etc.] Swiftly and suddenly, both in a temporal and spiritual sense; (see Gill on “<sup>2181</sup>Proverbs 6:11”);

*and thy want as an armed man*; irresistibly. Here ends according to some the “second”, according to others the “third” part of this book of Proverbs, another beginning with the following chapter.