

## CHAPTER 25

**Ver. 1.** *These [are] are also proverbs of Solomon,* etc.] These that follow to the end of the book, as well as those which go before. Here begins a “third”, some say a “fourth” part of this book. The Targum and Syriac version read,

“these are also the deep proverbs of Solomon;”

and the Arabic version adds,

“the exposition of which is difficult;”

*which the men Hezekiah king of Judah copied out;* out of the writings of Solomon; out of his three thousand proverbs, it, may be; or out of the public records, which contained an account of his words and deeds. Who these men were is not certain; perhaps his ministers of state, Eliakim, Sheban, and Joah; or the prophets of his time, Isaiah, Micah, and Hosea: the Targum and Syriac version call them his “friends”. Whoever they were, no doubt they were employed by Hezekiah; and which is recorded to his honour, that he was so careful to preserve such useful sayings, and annex them to those that were already collected and put together as above. This verse, it is likely, was written by one of the copiers. The proverbs begin in (~~3182~~ Proverbs 25:2).

**Ver. 2.** *[It is] the glory of God to conceal a thing,* etc.] Secret things belong unto him, and they are kept so by him: many things which he does reveal, yet the “modus” or manner of them remains hidden; as what relates to his own being, and manner of subsisting; the trinity of Persons in the Godhead; the filiation or the Son, and the procession of the Spirit; the incarnation of Christ, and the like: the predestination of men to life and death, though that there is such a thing is certain, yet who they are is not known; the purposes and decrees of God, all that he determines to do, or shall be done, are known unto him from eternity; but then the times and seasons in which they will be accomplished are kept in his own power; the day and hour of the last judgment none knows but himself: his judgments, and ways in providence, are unsearchable and past finding out; there are many things in it unaccountable to men; nor does he give an account of them to the sons of men; these are at present secrets in his own breast, his

judgments will be made manifest. Now it is his glory to conceal them; they are all known to him, and the reasons of them; he is the omniscient all wise God, and stands in no need of the advice of creatures; nor are they taken into his privy council. Some apply this to his pardoning sin, which is sometimes expressed by “covering” it; and in which the glory of his grace and mercy is greatly displayed. Jarchi interprets it of the history of the work of creation, and Ezekiel’s vision of the wheels, the understanding of which is very difficult; and which the Jews forbid the reading of, as also Solomon’s Song, until men are come to ripeness of years;

*but the honour of kings [is] to search out a matter*; to investigate everything relating to civil government, and that may be of use to them in the exercise of it; particularly to search into the word of God, and observe the laws in it, and rule according to them; or make such laws as are agreeably to it, and execute them: and to inquire diligently into all causes that are brought before them, that they may find out the truth of things, and pass judgment accordingly; and be able to give reasons for what they do in the public affairs of government, and make it appear that they are according to the rules of truth and justice; and to do so will gain them immortal honour! see (<sup><489/6></sup>Job 29:16).

**Ver. 3.** *The heaven for height, and the earth for depth*, etc.] These are eminent for what are ascribed to them; nothing is higher than the heavens, nor anything deeper than the earth; the height of the heavens cannot be reached, and the centre of the earth cannot easily be got unto; the heavens above cannot be measured, and the foundation of the earth cannot be searched beneath; at least not by common persons, whatever may be done in their way by astronomers and geometricians. And thus, as the heavens and the earth are immeasurable, (<sup><261/7></sup>Jeremiah 31:37); so

*the heart of kings [is] unsearchable*; especially such an one as Solomon was, who had largeness of heart as the sand on the seashore: and this must be understood of such who have the art of governing; for some are so weak in their conduct, and so much expose themselves, that it is easy to see what is in their hearts, and what are the springs of their actions. Wise princes lay their schemes deep, and conceal their designs, and keep their reasons of state secret, so that it is not an easy thing to penetrate into their councils and views: for this does not so much respect the multitude of business they have upon their hearts and hands, as Jarchi and others understand it, as the privacy and secrecy in which they are managed, and

the reasons of which are kept from common persons, Who therefore are not proper judges of them; and who yet will often take upon them to censure and condemn, when they are ignorant of the true cause of such conduct.

**Ver. 4.** *Take away the dross from the silver*, etc.] By putting it into the furnace, and purging it from it:

*and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer*; not out of the furnace, a vessel formed and shaped, but pure silver shall come out of it for the refiner; of which a vessel may be made, very honourable, beautiful, and fit for use: the application of it is in (<sup>1675</sup>Proverbs 25:5).

**Ver. 5.** *Take away the wicked [from] before the king*, etc.] Wicked ministers and counsellors; they are the “dross”, worthless and useless; yea, hurtful and pernicious. The king is the “refiner”, for whom the vessel is; the kingdom is the silver vessel refined; and which becomes much the better, when wicked men are removed from the court and cabinet council of kings; as well as the king is the happier, and his throne more firm and secure, as follows:

*and his throne shall be established in righteousness*; which he shall execute, wicked ministers being removed from him, who advised him to take unrighteous measures; and others being put in their room, who counsel him to do acts of justice; whereby his throne is secured, and he sits firm upon it, which before was tottering and shaking, and lie in great danger of being removed from it.

**Ver. 6.** *Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king*, etc.] Intrude not thyself into his presence; or rush not into it in a rude and irreverent way; or be not ambitious to be a courtier: or “do not appear glorious”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; or “honour thyself”,<sup>f675</sup> as the word signifies; do not appear too gay at court, or make too splendid an appearance, above thy fortune and station; and which may seem to vie with and outdo the king himself, which will not be well taken; princes love not to be equalled, and much less excelled;

*and stand not in the place of great [men]*; where the king’s family or his nobles should stand, his ministers and counsellors of state, and those that wait upon him.

**Ver. 7.** *For better [it is] that it be said unto thee, Come up hither,* etc.] It is much more to thine honour and credit to seat thyself in a place rather beneath than above thee; which being observed by some of the officers at court, or by him whose business it is to look after such things, he will beckon or call to thee to come up to a higher and more honourable place:

*than that thou shouldest be put lower, in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen;* than that thou shouldest be thrust away with a severe rebuke for thy boldness and arrogance, in approaching too near the king's person, and taking the place of some great man, which did not become thee, and be forced down to a lower place, to thy great mortification; and the more, as this will be in the presence of the prince thou hadst the curiosity of seeing, and the ambition of making thyself acceptable to, by a gay and splendid appearance; and now with great disgrace turned out of his presence, or at least driven to a great distance from him. Our Lord seems to refer to this passage, in (<sup>448</sup>Luke 14:8-10).

**Ver. 8.** *Go not forth hastily to strive,* etc.] To go to law with a neighbour; think well of it beforehand; consider the nature of the cause, whether right or wrong; or whether it is a matter of such moment as to go to law about; whether it will not be deemed a frivolous and vexatious suit; whether able to bear the expenses of it, and what may probably be the success of it;

*lest [thou know not] what to do in the end thereof;* for a livelihood, having spent all thy substance in the lawsuit, and so reduced to poverty as not to know how to live, or how and where to show thy face, through the disgrace that shall fall upon time by losing the cause;

*when that neighbour hath put thee to shame;* in open court, and proved himself to be in the right, and that thou art in the wrong; himself an honest man, and thee a litigious person.

**Ver. 9.** *Debate thy cause with thy neighbour [himself],* etc.] Between thee and him alone; lay the matter before him, and hear what he has to say for himself, by which you will better judge of the nature of the cause; try to compromise things, and make up the difference between you, which is much better than to commence a lawsuit; at least such a step should be taken first; (see <sup>465</sup>Matthew 5:25);

*and discover not a secret to another;* if the thing in controversy is a secret, do not acquaint another person with it; keep it among yourselves, if the affair can be made up without bringing it into a court of judicature; besides,

by communicating it to others, you may have bad counsel given, and be led to take indirect methods: or, “the secret of another”, or, “another secret do not discover”<sup>f676</sup>; if you know anything scandalous and reproachful of your neighbour and his family, you are contending with, which does not concern the cause in hand, do not divulge it, as persons from a spirit of revenge are apt to do, when they are quarrelling or litigating a point with each other.

**Ver. 10.** *Lest he that heareth [it] put thee to shame*, etc.] Or, “reproach thee”<sup>f677</sup> with treachery and deceit. Either the person of whom it is told, or the person to whom it is told; who may make thee ashamed, either by fixing the odious character of a defamer, a whisperer, and backbiter, on thee; or by making a retaliation, and in his turn make known some secret things concerning thyself, which before were not known, and, now published, will be to thy disgrace;

*and thine infamy turn not away*; it shall stick so close to thee, that thou shalt never get clear of it as long as thou livest, or ever retrieve thy credit; the brand of infamy shall ever be upon thee.

**Ver. 11.** *A word fitly spoken*, etc.] Or, “a word spoken on its wheels”<sup>f678</sup>: that proceeds aright, keeps due order, is well circumstanced as to matter, method, time, place, and persons; a discourse well put together, properly pronounced, roundly, easily, and fluently delivered to proper persons, and adapted to their circumstances; and “seasonably” spoken, as the Targum and many versions render it:

*[is like] apples of gold in pictures of silver*; either like apples made of gold, and so valuable and precious; or as apples, called golden from their colour, as golden pippins, and golden rennets; or oranges, which are sometimes called golden apples: either of these in silver cases and enclosures, as Aben Ezra and Gersom interpret the word, or in a silver cup, as the Syriac version, or in silver lattices, as Maimonides, through which they may be seen, look very pleasant and delightful. The words may design, as some think, silver baskets of network<sup>f679</sup>; into which golden apples or oranges being put, and placed on a table, look very beautiful; and to such a word fitly spoken is compared. This may be applied to the word of the Gospel, as spoken by Christ, the great Prophet of the church; who has the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to weary souls, (<sup>2801</sup>Isaiah 50:4); and by his ministers, who publish the Gospel, that faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation: this being the word of salvation, is fitly spoken to all sensible sinners, and must be exceeding agreeable to them;

since it is of salvation from all sin, and for the chief of sinners, and entirely of free grace; includes all blessings in it, and is for ever; and since it is a proclamation of pardon of all sorts of sins and sinners, and of all their sins, and according to the riches of grace; and is also the word of reconciliation, and publishes peace to rebels, who could not make their own peace with God; and yet this is done by the blood of Christ, as the Gospel declares: and, seeing it is likewise the word of righteousness, which reveals the righteousness of Christ as justifying, when a man's own righteousness will not acquit him; and invites weary souls to Christ for rest, and therefore must be grateful to all such persons, and be esteemed as valuable as balls or apples of gold; and as pleasant and delightful to see and hear of as those set in silver baskets of network; and be as refreshing and comfortable, and as grateful to the taste, as real apples of the best kind; (see <sup>2M1P</sup>Song of Solomon 2:2, 5). It may also be applied to the promises of grace, seasonably spoken, and suitably applied by the Spirit of God; who takes the promises which are in Christ, and shows and opens them to souls in distress, at the most proper and seasonable time; and which are exceeding great and precious, yield abundance of pleasure and delight, and are very comfortable. Yea, this may be applied to the words of good men, in private conversation, either by way of counsel, or comfort, or admonition; and to every word that is with grace, and ministers grace to the hearer, and is for the use of edifying, when time, place, persons, and circumstances, are observed. Maimonides<sup>f680</sup> thinks the external sense of the word is meant by the silver, and the internal sense by the gold; which latter is seen through, and is much better than the former.

**Ver. 12.** [*As*] *an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold*, etc.] As a golden earring, when first put on, gives pain and uneasiness; but, being well hung and fixed, is very ornamental, being of fine gold, and especially when any jewels are upon it; which may be meant by the ornament, as the word is rendered, (<sup>2M1P</sup>Song of Solomon 7:1);

[*so is*] *a wise reprovew upon an obedient ear*; such is the reproof of a wise man, which is seasonably given, in a fit and proper manner; and which appears to proceed from love, and is designed for good, and done in great affection and faithfulness: this, though it may be a little grating to the ear at first, yet, when well considered and received, instead of leaving any infamy or reproach on the person reprovew, it is an ornament to him, as well as reflects honour upon the reprovew. It may be rendered, “[so is] he that reprovew a wise man, upon” or “with an obedient ear”<sup>f681</sup>; a wise man that

has an obedient or hearing ear, who is so wise as to altered to reproofs given him, and which he takes kindly, and receives profit and advantage from them; (see <sup>1008</sup>Proverbs 9:8 15:31).

**Ver. 13.** *As the cold of snow in the time of harvest*, etc.] As water as cold as snow; or as a breeze of air, such as in a time of snow; and so Jarchi,

“as the cold of the days of snow, which a man desires in summer, and not snow simply, for snow itself is not good in the time of harvest;”

(see <sup>1001</sup>Proverbs 24:1). Or rather “as a shield” or “covering of snow”<sup>f682</sup>, as the word signifies: perhaps, as Gussetius<sup>f683</sup> thinks, a vessel in such a form, in which snow was kept in summer, is meant; and the same word, the two first radical letters being doubled, is used for the pot, or urn, in which the manna was kept, (<sup>1063</sup>Exodus 16:33). As snow, that in those hot countries used to be kept in vessels, in places underground, to cool their drink with in summertime; just as ice is kept with us, in like places, for the same purpose; and then the sense is, as drink cooled with snow is very agreeable, and exceeding refreshing to those that labour in the field in the time of harvest;

*[so is] a faithful messenger to them that send him: for he refresheth the soul of his masters:* such an one that is sent with a message, and faithfully executes it, while he is gone, the mind of his master is very thoughtful about the it sue and success of it; but when he returns and gives him an account of it, and especially when he succeeds to his wish; it “restores” and settles his mind, as the word<sup>f684</sup> signifies; and gives him a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction, and renders the messenger dear and valuable to him. Christ is the messenger, one of a thousand, sent by his divine Father on a message of grace and salvation, in which he has succeeded being faithful to him that appointed him; and so exceeding acceptable to him, his servant, his elect, in whom his soul delighteth! Gospel ministers are messengers, and faithful ones, whose feet are beautiful, and their words acceptable to souls to whom they are sent, and are a sweet savour to him that sent them; and who will commend them as good and faithful servants, and appoint them rulers over many cities, and introduce them into his joy.

**Ver. 14.** *Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift*, etc.] Of his charity and alms deeds; bragging of great things he does this way, when he does nothing; or who is very vain in making large promises of what he will give,



when he does not perform; either not having it in his heart, or in the power of his hands, to give what he promises; Satan like, who offered to give all the kingdoms of this world to Christ, if he would worship him, when nothing of it belonged unto him, or was in his power to give: and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “a glorious man”; that is, a vainglorious man, and “not fulfilling promises”. It may very well be applied to false teachers, who boast of their gifts and spiritual knowledge, when they have none; speaking great swelling words of vanity, when they are empty of all that is good, and are as follow:

*[is like] like clouds and wind without rain;* which make a show and appearance of rain, promise much, but produce none; (see <sup><6027></sup>2 Peter 2:17,18) (<sup><6012></sup>Jude 1:12).

**Ver. 15.** *By long forbearing is a prince persuaded,* etc.] To come into measures, and do that which his council and ministry advise him to, and to which he may seem at first very averse; but by a mild and gentle representation of things, by an humble submission of them to him, and by frequent remonstrances and patient waiting, his mind is softened, bent, and inclined to take their advice, and pursue the measures suggested to him; which, had they been pressed with heat, haughtiness, and haste, would have been rejected;

*and a soft tongue breaketh the bone;* or “hardness”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; soft words, or words delivered in soft language, remove hardness and roughness from the minds of men; and work upon, influence, and bend men, whose wills are obstinate and stubborn, and make them pliable and tractable: so David, with a soft tongue, wrought upon Saul, his enemy; and Abigail, by her soft language, turned the mind of David, who was bent upon the destruction of Nabal, (<sup><0246></sup>1 Samuel 24:16 25:32); (see <sup><0151></sup>Proverbs 15:1). Jarchi interprets this soft tongue of prayer and supplication, by which severe things against sinners are removed from them; and so he understands the former clause of the forbearance of God, which gives encouragement to sinners, to persuade him in their favour by repentance and prayer; (see <sup><0136></sup>Matthew 18:26,27).

**Ver. 16.** *Hast thou found honey?* etc.] Of which there was great plenty in Judea; and was to be found in fields and woods, (<sup><0125></sup>1 Samuel 14:25,26);

*eat so much as is sufficient for thee;* to satisfy appetite, without overcharging the stomach; what may be conducive to health, and no more;



*lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it*; that is, overfilled; filled to a loathing of it, so as to cause a casting of it up this is not merely to be understood in a literal sense; something more is intended, as in (<sup>3043</sup>Proverbs 24:13); and according to the sense there, that which Maimonides<sup>f685</sup> gives of this seems agreeable; that it respects the getting of wisdom and knowledge, which, like honey, is sweet and desirable, and excellent, and nourishing, moderately used: but then persons should take care to keep within due bounds, and not seek to be too wise; or to exercise themselves in things too high for them, and aim at that which is above their capacity; but should content themselves with what is within their reach and compass: and so Gersom understands it. Some think that moderation in the use of worldly things and lawful pleasures is here recommended: and others that the words refer to what follow; that when a man has got a pleasant and delightful friend, he should not visit him too often; lest, too much familiarity bringing contempt, he should lose his friend: so Jarchi connects the words,

**Ver. 17.** *Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house*, etc.] Not but that it is commendable to be neighbourly and friendly, or for one neighbour to visit another; but then it should not be very frequent; a man should not be always or often at his neighbour's house. So the words may be rendered, "make thy foot precious" or "rare at thy neighbour's house"<sup>f686</sup>; be seldom there;

*lest he be weary of thee, and [so] hate thee*; or, "lest he be sated with thee"<sup>f687</sup>; filled with thy company to a loathing of it, as the stomach with eating too much honey, and so his friendship be turned into hatred.

**Ver. 18.** *A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour*, etc.] In whose house he has often been, and whom he has frequently visited; and, observing what was done there, not only discovers and tells abroad the secrets of his family, but even things which are false; yea, in a court of judicature, appears a witness against him, and swears falsely to his hurt and prejudice. Such a man

*[is] a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow*; that is, to his neighbour, against whom he bears false witness; and, by so doing, he mauls his fame, his credit, character, and reputation; and, as with a sword, takes away his life; and against whom there is no more guarding than against a sharp arrow, that comes from afar, suddenly and swiftly.

**Ver. 19.** *Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble*, etc.] It is not good to put confidence in any man, not in princes, nor in the best of men; much less in an unfaithful, prevaricating, and treacherous man; and especially in a time of distress and trouble, depending on his help and assistance, which is leaning on a broken reed, and trusting to a broken staff. Or, “the confidence of an unfaithful man in time of trouble”<sup>f688</sup>; that which he puts confidence in; who trusts in his riches, or in his righteousness, or in his own heart, all which are vain and deceitful:

*[is like] a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint*; which are so far from being of any use, the one in eating food, and the other in walking, that they are both an hindrance to those actions, and cause pain and uneasiness: or, “a bad tooth”, so the Targum and Syriac version; a rotten one.

**Ver. 20.** *[As] he that taketh away a garment in cold weather*, etc.] Either takes it off of himself, or another person, when it would be rather more proper to put another garment on, and so is exposed to the injury of cold weather;

*[and as] vinegar upon nitre*: nitre was found in Egypt, beyond Memphis, as Strabo says<sup>f689</sup>; there were two mines of nitre, which produced much, and thence it was called the Nitriotic Nome: others say, nitre has its name from Nitria, a town in Egypt<sup>f690</sup>, which gives name to the Nitrian desert, where there is a lake called Latron; from the bottom of which, that sort of nitre, called Natron, arises to the top, as is apprehended, and there, by the heat of the sun, condenses into this kind of substance<sup>f691</sup>, which will react with an acid; and so vinegar poured upon it will irritate and disturb it, cause it to react, and make a noise and a hissing. This must be understood only of this sort of nitre, of the nitre of the ancients; not of the moderns, which is no other than saltpetre; for though this will ferment with vinegar, saltpetre will not<sup>f692</sup>: nitre is dissolved by a liquid, but not any, only that which is cold, as Aristotle observes<sup>f693</sup>, as is vinegar; and therefore, with great propriety, this is joined to what goes before;

*so [is] he that singeth songs to a heavy heart*; rather distresses and afflicts him the more; as he cannot sing himself, he cannot bear to hear others sing; such rather should be condoled and wept with than to have songs sung to them. Some understand the words in a sense the reverse; the word rendered taketh away, in the first clause, has the signification of adorning with a garment; hence they render it, “as he that putteth on a garment”<sup>f694</sup> for ornament in cold weather, and as vinegar to nitre, so is he that singeth

songs to a heavy heart"; that is, as an additional garment drives away cold, and vinegar dissolves nitre, so singing songs to a heavy hearted man drives away sorrow; as in the case of Saul, such an effect had music on him, (<sup><0962></sup>1 Samuel 16:21); or rather, to put on a thin garment for ornament in cold weather is as absurd and unseasonable as to put vinegar to nitre, or to a wound, as Schultens, and to sing songs to a heavy heart; all absurd.

**Ver. 21.** *If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat*, etc.] Which includes all manner of food; whatever persons may have in their houses, that they should bring out and feed the hungry with, even though an enemy;

*and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink*; which was what was usually and in common drank in those countries. These two, bread and water, take in all the necessaries of life; and giving them is expressive of all acts of beneficence and humanity to be performed to enemies; (see <sup><1162></sup>2 Kings 6:22); or "drink to him", so Pagninus and Montanus; which is still more expressive of respect and kindness.

**Ver. 22.** *For thou shall heap coals of fire upon his head*, etc.] Not to increase his punishment and damnation, the more aggravated by kindness shown him; but to bring him by such means to a sense of former injuries, and to shame for them, repentance of them, and love of the person injured, and carefulness for the future of doing him any further wrong;

*and the Lord shall reward thee*: with good things, for all the good done to thine enemy, whether it has the desired effect on him or not; or whether he rewards thee or not; (see <sup><6121></sup>Romans 12:20,21).

**Ver. 23.** *The north wind driveth away rain*, etc.] So the geographer<sup>f695</sup> says, the swift north wind drives away the moist clouds; which usually come from the opposite quarter, the south. The word used has the signification of conceiving, and begetting, and bringing forth; hence some<sup>f696</sup> render it to a different sense, and so the Targum,

"the north wind bringeth forth rain;"

and in this sense Gersom interprets it, and says,

"the north wind produces rain in Jerusalem, because it brings there the vapours that ascend from the sea, which lies north unto it;"

and the philosopher<sup>f697</sup> says, that in the northern parts of the world the south wind produces rain; and in the southern parts the north wind produces it, as in Judea. But in (<sup><3872></sup>Job 37:22), fair, fine, golden, serene, “weather”, is said to “come out of the north”; agreeably to which, the north wind is by Homer<sup>f698</sup> called *αἰψρηγενετης*, the producer of serene weather; and by Virgil<sup>f699</sup> “clarus aquilo”, i.e. what makes serene. The Arabic version reads it, “the south wind”; and that does bring rain, and, as that version has it, excites the clouds. But the first reading and sense of the words seem best<sup>f700</sup>, and agree with what follows:

*so [doth] an angry countenance a backbiting tongue*; drives it away, discourages and silences it. When a man puts on a stern countenance, a frowning and angry look, on such who bring him slanderous reports and idle tales of their neighbours, and reproach and backbite them, it checks them, and puts a stop to their practices; whereas listening to them, and especially with an air of pleasure, encourages them in them; were there not so many that take pleasure in hearing those talebearers and backbiters, were they more roughly dealt with, as the blustering north wind does with the rain, there would not be so much of this evil practised.

**Ver. 24.** [*It is] better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman and in a wide house.*] (See Gill on <sup><3209></sup>Proverbs 21:9”).

**Ver. 25.** [*As] cold waters to a thirsty soul*, etc.] Water is naturally cold; and is by classic writers expressed by “cold” itself<sup>f701</sup>, and is very refreshing to one athirst through heat: or, “to a weary soul”<sup>f702</sup>; to one wearied with labour; or to a traveller weary with travelling, especially in hot countries, as in the deserts of Arabia, or in places where it is rare to meet with a brook, stream, or fountain of water; which, when he does, it is exceeding pleasant and agreeable to him;

*so [is] good news from a far country*; so acceptable is it to hear from a friend in a distant part of the world, and particularly to hear good news of him. Such is the Gospel; it is good news, and glad tidings of good things; it brings the good news of the grace, and favour, and good will of God to men; of his appointment and provision of a Saviour for them; of the incarnation of Christ; of salvation being wrought out by him for the chief of sinners, which is free, full, and for ever; and of peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life, through him, And this comes “from a far country”; from heaven, the better country than Canaan, which was a type of it, or any country in this world, and which is afar from hence; the Gospel

comes from God in heaven, and it is a report concerning that; it is good news to saints, of an estate they have there, an inheritance, a house, a city and kingdom prepared for them there: this news is brought by the prophets of the Old Testament, who diligently inquired of salvation by Christ; by the angels at Christ's incarnation; by John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ; by Christ himself, who was anointed to preach good tidings to the meek; and by his apostles, and all the faithful ministers of the word: and the message they bring is good news; not to carnal and self-righteous persons, but to sensible sinners; and to them it is as cold waters to a weary or thirsty soul; it assuages the heat of the law, and the wrath that works in the conscience; it quenches the thirst of carnal things, and after a man's own righteousness; it revives and refreshes his weary drooping spirits, and fills him with a joy unspeakable and full of glory; as Jacob's spirits were revived on hearing the good news of Joseph, (<sup><04525></sup>Genesis 45:26-28).

**Ver. 26.** *A righteous man falling dozen before the wicked*, etc.] Either falling into calamity and distress by means of the wicked man, through his malice and cunning, and which he seeing, rejoices at; or crouching unto him, bowing before him, yielding to him, not daring to oppose or reprove him; or falling into sin in his presence, which he ever after reproaches him for, and openly exposes him, so that his usefulness is lost; and especially if he joins with the wicked man in his course of living; and particularly if a civil magistrate, and acts unrighteously in his office: he

*[is as] a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring*; like a spring or fountain muddied with the feet of men or beasts; so that; he who was before as a clear spring of flowing water, a fountain of justice to his neighbours, from whom good doctrine and wholesome advice flowed, is now of no use by instruction or example, but the contrary.

**Ver. 27.** *[It is] not good to eat much honey*, etc.] That is too much otherwise it is good to eat, (<sup><20813></sup>Proverbs 24:13); but too much is hurtful, it surfeits the stomach increases choler<sup>f703</sup> and creates loathing; and indeed, too much of anything is bad<sup>f704</sup>;

*so [for men] to search their own glory [is not] glory*: to set forth their own excellencies, to sound forth their own praises to seek honour of men, to use all methods to gain popular applause; this is not glorious and praiseworthy, but dishonourable; or it may be rendered as it literally lies in the original, "but to search out", or "the searching out of their glory [is] glory"<sup>f705</sup>; either the glory of righteous men, as Aben Ezra interprets it,

such as stand and do not fall before the wicked; to search out their excellencies and virtues, and follow their example, is glorious and honourable: or to search the glory of the knowledge of divine things, comparable to honey, is commendable and glorious; for though a man may eat too much honey, yet he cannot have too much knowledge of divine and spiritual things, or be satiated and overfilled with them; to which the Septuagint version agrees, “but we ought to honour glorious words”: the glorious truths of the word of God ought to be had in great esteem, and to search out the glory of them is honourable; our Lord directs to a search of the Scriptures, because they testify of him, (~~REF~~ John 5:39); and we can never know too much of him, or of the precious doctrines of the Gospel; unless this is to be understood of such things as should not be curiously inquired into; men should not be wise above what is written nor search into those things which God has concealed; as his own nature and perfections, the mode of subsisting of the three Persons in the Godhead, his secret purposes and decrees, and unsearchable judgments. To which sense agrees the Vulgate Latin version,

“so he who is the searcher of majesty shall be oppressed by glory;”

he shall be bore down by it, and not able to bear the glory of it: and the Targum is,

“to eat much honey is not good, nor to search glorious words.”

Jarchi takes the words in this sense; and illustrates them by the work of creation, Ezekiel’s vision of the wheels, the decrees of God, and the reasons of them.

**Ver. 28.** *He that [hath] no rule over his own spirit*, etc.] His affections and passions, puts no restraint, unto them, as the word signifies; no guard against them, no fence about them, to curb his curiosity, to check his pride and vanity, to restrain his wrath and anger and revenge, and keep within due bounds his ambition and itch of vainglory;

*[is like] a city that broken down [and] without walls*; into which the may go with pleasure, and which is exposed to the rapine and violence of everyone; and so a man that has no command of himself and passions, but gives the reins to them, is exposed to the enemy of souls, Satan and is liable to every sin, snare and temptation.