

## CHAPTER 27

**Ver. 1.** *Boast not thyself of tomorrow*, etc.] Or, “of tomorrow day”,<sup>f741</sup>. Either of having a tomorrow, or of any future time; no man can assure himself of more than the present time; for, however desirable long life is, none can be certain of it; so says the poet<sup>f742</sup>: for though there is a common term of man’s life, threescore years and ten, yet no one can be sure of arriving to it; and, though there may be a human probability of long life, in some persons of hale and strong constitutions, yet there is no certainty, since life is so frail a thing; the breath of man is in his nostrils, which is soon and easily stopped; his life is but as a vapour, which appears for a little while, and then vanishes away; all flesh is as grass, which in the morning flourishes, in the evening is cut down, and on the morrow is cast into the oven: man is like a flower, gay and beautiful for a season, but a wind, an easterly blasting wind, passes over it, and it is gone; his days are as a shadow that declineth towards the evening; they are as a hand’s breadth; yea, his age is as nothing before the Lord. Death is certain to all men, as the fruit of sin, by the appointment of God; and there is a certain time fixed for it, which cannot be exceeded; but of that day and hour no man knows; and therefore cannot boast of a moment of future time, or of a tomorrow, nor of what he shall enjoy on the morrow<sup>f743</sup>; for, what he has today he cannot be certain he shall have the next; he cannot assure himself of health and honour, of pleasures, riches, and friends; he may have health today, and sickness tomorrow; be in honour today, and in disgrace on the morrow: he may bid his soul eat, drink, and be merry, seeing he has much goods laid up for many years, and vainly say, tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant, when this night his soul may be required of him; he may have his wife and children, friends and relations, about him now, and before another day comes be stripped of them all; he may be in great affluence, and gave great substance for the present, and in a short time all may be taken from him, as Job’s was; riches are uncertain things, they make themselves wings and flee away. Nor should a man boast of what he will do on the morrow; either in civil things, in trade and business; to which the Apostle James applies this passage, (<sup>S0413</sup>James 4:13-16); or in acts of charity, so Aben Ezra explains it, boast not of an alms deed to be done tomorrow; whatever a man finds to be his duty to do in this respect, he should do it at once, while he has an opportunity: or in things religious;

as that he will repent of his sins, and amend his life on the morrow; that he will attend the means of grace, hear the Gospel, the voice of Christ; all which should be to day, and not be put off till tomorrow. Nor should true believers procrastinate the profession of their faith; nor should any duty, or exercise of religion, be postponed to another season; but men should work while it is day, and always abound in the work of the Lord, and be found so doing; (see <sup><2562></sup>Isaiah 56:12 <sup><2179></sup>Luke 12:19,20);

*for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*; time is like a teeming woman, to which the allusion is, big with something; but what that is is not known till brought forth: as a woman, big with child, knows not what she shall bring forth till the time comes, whether a son or a daughter, a dead or a living child; so the events of time, or what is in the womb of time, are not known till brought forth; these are the secret things which belong to God, which he keeps in his own breast; the times and seasons of things are only in his power, (<sup><4006></sup>Acts 1:6). We know not what the present day, as the Targum renders it, will bring forth; and still less what tomorrow will do, what changes it will produce in our circumstances, in our bodies and in our minds; so that we cannot be certain what we shall be, what we shall have, or what we shall do, on the morrow, even provided we have one.

**Ver. 2.** *Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth*, etc.] Men should do those things which are praiseworthy; and should do them openly, that they may be seen and praised for them: for it is honourable to have such a character as Demetrius had, who had a good report of all men; and as the brother had, whose praise in the Gospel was in all the churches. To be commended by others, by any but a man's self, is to his credit and reputation; but nothing more hurtful to it than self-commendation; (see <sup><4708></sup>2 Corinthians 10:18); in some cases it is right for a man indeed to commend himself, when the glory of God, the credit of religion, the cause of truth and self-vindication, require it; as the prophet Samuel, the Apostle Paul, and others, have been obliged to do, (<sup><923></sup>1 Samuel 12:3 <sup><4112></sup>2 Corinthians 11:12), etc.

*a stranger, and not thine own lips*; a stranger means any other than a man's self; and if it is one that he knows not, or has little acquaintance with; or if a foreigner, that does not personally know him, only has good testimonies of him, or has read his works; and especially if in other respects an enemy; it is greatly to his honour to be praised by him: and such a

commendation comes with much better grace than from himself, and from whom indeed it would not come with any.

**Ver. 3.** *A stone [is] heavy, and the sand weighty*, etc.] As was the stone which was at the well's mouth, where Laban's flocks were watered, which could not be rolled away till all the shepherds were gathered together, (<sup><QBP></sup>Genesis 29:2,3,8); and like the burdensome stone Jerusalem is compared to (<sup><SIBT></sup>Zechariah 12:3); and as that at the sepulchre of Christ, rolled away by the angel, (<sup><ABP></sup>Matthew 28:2). And sand is a very ponderous thing; difficult to be carried, as the Septuagint render it, as a bag of it is; and to which heavy afflictions are sometimes compared, (<sup><RHP></sup>Job 6:2,3);

*but a fool's wrath [is] heavier than them both*; it cannot be removed, it rests in his bosom; it is sometimes intolerable to himself; he sinks and dies under the weight of it, as Nabal did: "wrath killeth the foolish man", (<sup><RHP></sup>Job 5:2); and it is still more intolerable to others, as Nebuchadnezzar's wrath and his fiery furnace were.

**Ver. 4.** *Wrath [is] cruel, and anger [is] outrageous*, etc.] Or "an inundation"<sup>f744</sup>; it is like the breaking in of the sea, or a flood of mighty waters, which know no bounds, and there is no stopping them: so cruel and outrageous were the wrath and anger of Simeon and Levi, in destroying the Shechemites; of Pharaoh, in making the Israelites to serve with hard bondage, and ordering their male children to be killed and drowned; and of Herod, in murdering the infants in and about Bethlehem;

*but who [is] able to stand before envy?* which is secret in a man's heart, and privately contrives and works the ruin of another, and against which there no guarding. All mankind in Adam fell before the envy of Satan; for it was through the envy of the devil that sin and death came into the world, in the Apocrypha:

"Nevertheless through envy of the devil came death into the world: and they that do hold of his side do find it." (Wisdom 2:24)

Abel could not stand before the envy of Cain; nor Joseph before the envy of his brethren; nor Christ before the envy of the Jews, his bitter enemies; and, where it is, there is confusion and every evil work, (<sup><SIB4></sup>James 3:14,16). An envious man is worse than an angry and wrathful man; his wrath and anger may be soon over, or there may be ways and means of appeasing him; but envy continues and abides, and works insensibly.

**Ver. 5.** *Open rebuke [is] better than secret love.*] This is to be understood, not of rebuke publicly given; though Aben Ezra thinks public reproof is meant, which, arising from love, is better than that which is done in secret, though in love, as being more effectual; for rebuke among friends should be given privately, according to our Lord's direction, (<sup><A0815></sup>Matthew 18:15); but it signifies reproof given faithfully and plainly, with openness of heart, and without mincing the matter, and palliating the offence; but speaking out freely, and faithfully laying before a person the evil of his sin, in all the circumstances of it, as the Apostle Paul did to Peter, when he withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed, (<sup><A0811></sup>Galatians 2:11). Now such kind of reproof is better than such love to a person as will not suffer him to tell him of his faults, for fear of grieving him, or losing his friendship; or than such love as does not show itself in deeds, and particularly in faithful reproofs; for so to act is to hate a person, and suffer sin to be upon him, (<sup><A0817></sup>Leviticus 19:17).

**Ver. 6.** *Faithful [are] the wounds of a friend,* etc.] That is, friendly reproofs; which, though they may be severe, at least thought so, and may grieve and wound, and cause pain and uneasiness for the present, yet, proceeding from a spirit of love, faithfulness, and integrity, and designed for the good of the person reproofed, ought to be kindly received; (see <sup><A0815></sup>Psalm 141:5);

*but the kisses of an enemy [are] deceitful;* flow from a deceitful heart, and not to be confided in, as the kisses of Joab and Judas. It may be rather rendered, "are to be deprecated"<sup>f745</sup>; prayed against, as real evils, hurtful and pernicious; and so the Targum renders it, "are evil". Good is the advice of Isocrates<sup>f746</sup>,

"reckon them faithful, not who praise everything thou sayest or doest, but those that reprove what is amiss."

**Ver. 7.** *The full soul loatheth an honeycomb,* etc.] Or "tramples upon" it<sup>f747</sup>, as the word signifies, and most versions render it, expressive of contempt and abhorrence; and suits will the situation of the honeycomb, which was usually in trees and rocks in Palestine: and so might drop from thence, and be trampled upon by passengers; and especially such as are here described, whose appetites have been sated with dainties, and their stomachs heave at the most delicious food. Jarchi interprets this of one that has no desire after the doctrines of the law; and so the senses of it are not esteemed by him; whereas he that has a desire for it, even the things which

come to him with bitterness and labour are sweet to him. But it may be better applied to a self-sufficient man, that is full of himself: of his own wisdom and knowledge in divine things; of his strength, and the power of his free will; of his purity, holiness, goodness, and righteousness; who loathes the Gospel, comparable to the honeycomb for its sweetness; (see ~~20161~~ Proverbs 16:24); it being disagreeable to his taste, and as insipid as the white of an egg to him; and as being against him, which makes him out an arrant fool, blows a blast on all his goodness and goodliness, strips the creature of his righteousness, and excludes boasting;

*but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet*; that is in want of provision, has an appetite for it; anything, though ever so mean and disrelishing to others, is sweet to such an one; as was barley bread to Artaxerxes king of Persia, and country bread made of bran to Ptolemy Lagus king of Egypt, when in great distress for food<sup>f748</sup>: Seneca says<sup>f749</sup>, hunger will make bad bread fine food. And so is the Gospel, and every doctrine of it, to a sensible sinner; that is in want, and knows its wants, and has desires after spiritual things created in it; hungers and thirsts after the word and ordinances; after Christ, the bread of life; after the blessings of grace in him; particularly after the pardon of sin, and justifying righteousness and salvation by him; and after more knowledge of him, and communion with him. Now, though, here is nothing bitter in the Gospel, properly speaking, as in the law; yet, that which is bitter to others, and had been bitter to the above persons, is now sweet, and which are disagreeable to the flesh; as the denial of sinful, civil, and righteous self, which the Gospel teaches; and even that which is the most contemptible to men; as the preaching of the cross, or the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ; the doctrines of electing grace, imputed righteousness, the satisfaction of Christ, etc. How sweet are these to the taste of a hungry soul! and even though they are attended with bitter afflictions, the reproaches, revilings, and persecutions of men; as the paschal lamb, a type of Christ, was eaten with bitter herbs. This may also be applied to the hearing of the word; where and when there is plenty of means, men grow weary of the word, sick of it, and surfeit upon it and loath it; or, however, are very curious and nice, and cannot take up with plain preaching, but must have something suited to their palate, dressed up in a very elegant manner: but when the word of the Lord is precious or rare, and where there are few opportunities of hearing it, sensible souls, that have spiritual

appetites, are glad of it; and it is sweet unto them, though not so nicely dressed and though brought to them in a homely manner.

**Ver. 8.** *As a bird that wandereth from her nest*, etc.] To seek for food for herself and her young; or that leaves it without returning to it, and so her eggs or her young are exposed, and she herself liable to fall into the hands of birds of prey, or of the fowler, when she would be safe in her nest; as there was a law in Israel in her favour, (<sup>46216</sup>Deuteronomy 22:6); or as one that is forced out and obliged to wander from place to place, (<sup>23142</sup>Isaiah 16:2);

*so [is] a man that wandereth from his place*; who, in time of famine and distress, goes into other parts for bread, as Jacob's sons went down into Egypt; and such are they in a spiritual sense who leave all, and follow Christ for food for their souls; or who are forced to flee from place to place, and wander about in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth, because of the persecution of their enemies; or rather it is to be taken in an ill sense and applied to such who abide not in the calling whereunto they are called; dislike, and are unsatisfied with, their present business of life, and seek new employments, which oftentimes is to the hurt and detriment of themselves and families; and also to such who wander from the way of spiritual understanding, from the place of divine worship, from the word, ordinances, and commandments of the Lord; (see <sup>31216</sup>Proverbs 21:16).

**Ver. 9.** *Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart*, etc.] Meaning not the holy anointing oil for sacred use, or the perfume or incense offered on the altar of incense; but common oil or ointment used at entertainments, poured on the heads of the guests; and incense in censuring of rooms, which were very delightful, pleased the senses, and so exhilarated the heart;

*so [doth] the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel*; so the sweet and pleasant words, the wise and cordial counsel of a man's friend, rejoice his heart; he takes it well, he is highly delighted with it; he receives it kindly, and pursues it to advantage; or "by counsel of soul"<sup>1750</sup>, such as relates to the welfare of the soul here and hereafter; such is the counsel Christ gives, to buy of him gold tried in the fire, white raiment eye salve; and such as the Scriptures give, which, with the saints, are the men of their counsel, as they were David's; and which ministers of the Gospel give, who are therefore like ointment and perfume, "a sweet savour of life unto life": some render the words, and they will bear it, "so the sweetness of a

man's friend, more than the counsel of his soul"<sup>f751</sup> or than his own; that is, the sweet counsel of a friend is better than his own, and more rejoices his heart, and gives him more pleasure than that does; and this way go the Jewish commentators.

**Ver. 10.** *Thine own friend, and thy father's friend forsake not*, etc.] Who have been long tried and proved, and found faithful; these should be kept to and valued, and not new ones sought; which to do is oftentimes of bad consequence. Solomon valued his father's friend Hiram, and kept up friendship with him; but Rehoboam his son forsook the counsel of the old men his father's friends and counsellors, and followed the young men his new friends, and thereby lost ten tribes at once. Jarchi interprets this of God, the friend of Israel and of their fathers, who is not to be forsaken, and is a friend that loves at all times; and to forsake him is to forsake the fountain of living waters;

*neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity*; poverty and distress, to tell him thy case, expecting sympathy relief, and succour from him; but rather go to thy friend and father's friend, who sticks closer than a brother; (see <sup><2082></sup>Proverbs 18:24);

*[for] better is a neighbour [that is] near than a brother far off*: a neighbour that is a fast and faithful friend, and who is not only near as to place but as to affections is more serviceable and, useful to a man in time of distress than a brother though near in blood, yet as far off in place, so much more in affection, and from whom a man can promise nothing, and little is to be expected. The phrase in the preceding clause signifies a cloudy day, and such a day of distress through poverty is; in which sense it is used by Latin<sup>f752</sup> writers, when a man is alone, and former friends care not to come nigh him.

**Ver. 11.** *My son, be wise, and make my heart glad*, etc.] That is, show thyself to be a wise man by thy words and actions; endeavour to get a good share of wisdom and knowledge, and make a good use of it, and that will rejoice my heart; as nothing more gladdens the heart of a parent than the wisdom and prudent behaviour of his son; see (<sup><2000></sup>Proverbs 10:1 23:15,24,25);

*that I may answer him that reproacheth me*; with begetting a foolish son, or a wicked man; or making him such by ill examples; or through neglect of education; or by using too much severity in it.



**Ver. 12.** *A prudent [man] foreseeth the evil,* etc.] (See Gill on “<sup>412B</sup>Proverbs 22:3”); or “seeth the evil”<sup>753</sup>; the evil of sin, as it is contrary to the nature, will, and law and abominable in his sight; and not only the evil of gross actions of sin, but of indwelling lust; and such an one, who is wise to that which is good, sees the sad work sin has made in the world, and in himself; how it has defaced the image of God in man, stripped him of his righteousness, and defiled all the powers and faculties of his soul; upon which sight of it he is filled with shame, reflects upon himself for his past conduct, loathes sin, and himself for it, repents of it, confesses and forsakes it: he likewise sees the evil of punishment for sin, the just demerit of it, the curse of the law, the wrath of God, the second and eternal death, a separation from God, a sense and feeling of divine vengeance, anguish, and distress intolerable, and that for ever;

*[and] hideth himself;* not in secret places, that he may not be seen by the Lord; nor in his own works of righteousness, to secure him from the wrath of God: nor is it to he understood of his hiding himself from sinners and their company, and so escaping the pollutions of the world; but of his betaking himself to Christ, who is the city of refuge, the stronghold, the rock, in the clefts of which the people of God hide themselves; even in his wounds, or in him as a suffering crucified Saviour, and who is the hiding place from the wind, and covert from the storm of divine wrath; such are redemption by him, his sacrifice and satisfaction, his blood and righteousness, and intercession; see ( <sup>231D</sup>Isaiah 32:2); also (see Gill on “<sup>412B</sup>Proverbs 22:3”);

*[but] the simple pass on, [and] are punished;* such who are thoughtless and foolish, have no sight nor sense of sin and danger, go on in their sinful course of life without any care or concern, without any fear or dread, till their feet stumble on the dark mountains of eternity; and they fall into the bottomless pit of perdition, from whence there is no recovery.

**Ver. 13.** *Take his garment that is surety for a stranger, and take a pledge of him for a strange woman.*] (See Gill on “<sup>411G</sup>Proverbs 20:16”), where the same proverb is, and is expressed in the same words as here.

**Ver. 14.** *He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice,* etc.] So as not only to be heard by him, but by others; who is extravagant in his praises and commendations of him; who exceeds all bounds of modesty, truth, and decency; who affects pompous words, and hyperbolical expressions; and



shows himself to be a real sycophant and flatterer, having some sinister end to serve by it;

*rising early in the morning*; lest any should be before him, and get the benefit he seeks by his flattery; or as if he had not time enough in the day to finish his encomium, unless he began early in the morning, and continued it all the day; and so it denotes his being incessant at this work, always harping on this string, or expressing himself in this adulatory way; or, as some think, this is mentioned as an aggravation of his sin, that he should be acting this low, mean, and criminal part, when he should be employed in devotion and prayer to God;

*it shall be counted a curse to him*; either to the flatterer, by his friend whom he blesses, and by all wise men that hear him, who will despise him all one as if he cursed him: the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it to this sense, that such an one nothing differs, or nothing seems to differ, from one that curses: or else to the person blessed, whom others will curse or however detract from his character, because of the profuse praises bestowed upon him; nay, sometimes God himself curses such a man, who listens to, is fond of, and receives the fulsome flatteries of wicked men, as in the case of Herod, (<sup><4122></sup>Acts 12:22,23).

**Ver. 15.** *A continual dropping in a very rainy day*, etc.] That is, through the roof of a house which is not well covered, or which lets in rain by one means or another; so that in a thorough rainy day it keeps continually dropping, to the great annoyance of those within, and which is very uncomfortable to them: it is observed<sup>f754</sup> that rain is called by the name in the text, because a man is shut up under a roof falls; and continuing long he is shut up within doors and cannot come out;

*and a contentious woman are alike*; troublesome and uncomfortable; as in a rainy day, a man cannot go abroad with any pleasure, and if the rain is continually dropping upon him in his house he cannot sit there with any comfort; and so a contentious woman, that is always scolding and brawling, a man has no comfort at home; and if he goes abroad he is jeered and laughed at on her account by others; and perhaps she the more severely falls upon him when he returns for having been abroad; (see <sup><2193></sup>Proverbs 19:13).

**Ver. 16.** *Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind*, etc.] Whoever attempts to stop her brawls and contentions, to repress and restrain them, and hinder

her voice being heard in the streets, and endeavours to hide the shame that comes upon herself and family, attempts a thing as impossible as to hide the wind in the palm of a man's hand, or to stop it from blowing; for as that, by being restrained or pent up by any methods that can be used, makes the greater noise, so, by all the means that are used to still a contentious woman, she is but the more noisy and clamorous, and becomes more shameful and infamous;

*and the ointment of his right hand, [which] bewrayeth [itself]*: or “will call” or “calls”<sup>f755</sup>, and says, in effect, Here am I; for the smell of it, which cannot be hid when held in a man's hand, betrays it; and the faster he holds it, and the more he presses and squeezes it, and the more it is heated hereby, the more it diffuses its savour, and is known to be where it is; and so all attempts to stop the mouth of a brawling woman does but cause her to brawl the louder.

**Ver. 17.** *Iron sharpeneth iron*, etc.] A sword or knife made of iron is sharpened by it; so butchers sharpen their knives;

*so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend*; by conversation with him; thus learned men sharpen one another's minds, and excite each other to learned studies; Christians sharpen one another's graces, or stir up each other to the exercise of them, and the gifts which are bestowed on them, and to love and to good works. So Jarchi and Gersom understand it of the sharpening of men's minds to the learning of doctrine; but Aben Ezra, takes it in an ill sense, that as iron strikes iron and sharpens it, so a wrathful man irritates and provokes wrath in another. Some render the words, “as iron delighteth in iron, so a man rejoiceth the countenance of his friend”;<sup>f756</sup> by his company and conversation.

**Ver. 18.** *Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof*, etc.] That takes care of a fig tree, either his own or another's, planted in his garden or vineyard; (see <sup><4136></sup>Luke 13:6); who cultivates it, digs about and dungs it, and prunes it, and does everything necessary to it; when it brings forth fruit, and that is ripe and fit to eat, he eats of it, as it is but just he should; (see <sup><4197></sup>1 Corinthians 9:7);

*so he that waiteth on his master*; or “that keeps his master”<sup>f757</sup>, his person from danger, and his goods faithfully committed to his trust; or “that observes his master”<sup>f758</sup>, that looks to his hand, observes his motions, directions, and commands;

*shall be honoured*; as Joseph was in Potiphar's house, and elsewhere; and as all those are who observe the commandments of God, and are the servants of Christ; (see <sup><0120></sup>1 Samuel 2:30 <sup><0126></sup>John 12:26).

**Ver. 19.** *As in water face [answereth] to face*, etc.] As water is as a looking glass, in which a man may behold his own face and another's; or as the face in the water answers to the face of a man, and there is a great likeness between them. All things through water appear greater, as Seneca<sup>f759</sup> observes, and so more clear and plain;

*so the heart of man to man*; one man's heart may be seen and discerned in some measure by another, as by his countenance; for though, as the poet<sup>f760</sup> says, "frontis nulla fides", yet the countenance is often the index of the mind, though not an infallible one; wrath and anger in the breast may be seen in the face, as were in Cain's; thus Jacob saw some resentment at him in the mind of Laban, and judged he had some design of mischief against him by the change of his countenance; also what is in the heart of man is discerned by what comes out of it, by his words, and also by his actions; yea, a man may know in a good measure what is in another man's heart, by what he finds in his own: the word of God is a glass, or medium of vision, and like water, in which a man's face is seen, through which a man sees his own heart; the law is a glass, in which an enlightened person sees not only the perfections of God, the nature of righteousness, but also his sin, and the sinfulness of it; this glass neither magnifies nor multiplies his sins, but sets them in a true light before him, by which he discerns heart sins, and sees and knows the plague of his heart; and the Gospel is a glass, wherein he beholds the glory of Christ, sees and can discern whether Christ is formed in him, and he has the grace of the Spirit of God wrought in his soul, as faith, hope, love, repentance, humility, self-denial, etc. moreover, as the face seen in the water is similar to a man's face, so the hearts of men are alike, not merely in a natural sense, see (<sup><0315></sup>Psalm 33:15); but in a moral and spiritual sense the hearts of unregenerate men are alike, and answer to each other; for they are all equally corrupted, one and depraved; the heart of every man is desperately wicked; the imaginations of the thoughts of the hearts or wicked men, one and all of them, are only evil, and that continually; their affections are inordinately the same, they love and hate the same persons and things; their minds and consciences are all defiled; their understandings are darkened; their wills are averse to that which is good, and bent on that which is evil: and so the hearts of good men are alike; they have all one heart and one way given them; their experiences

agree as to the work of grace and conversion; they are all made sensible of sin, the evil of it, and danger by it; they are all brought off of their own righteousness, and are led to Christ to depend on him alone for righteousness, pardon, and eternal life; they are partakers of the same promises in the Gospel, and have the same enemies to grapple with, and the same temptations, trials, and exercises from sin, Satan, and the world; and they have the same things put into their hearts, the laws of God, the doctrines of Christ, and the several graces of the Spirit of Christ; so that there cannot be a greater likeness between a man's face and that seen in the water, than there is between the heart of one saint and another; the hearts of Old and New Testament saints, and of all in all ages and places, answer to one another. The Targum paraphrases it to a sense quite the reverse,

“as waters and as faces which are not like one to another, so the hearts of the children of men are not like one to another;”

and to the same sense are the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

**Ver. 20.** *Hell and destruction are never full*, etc.] The grave, as the word used often signifies; and which may be called “destruction”, because bodies laid in it are soon corrupted and destroyed; and though bodies are cast into it and devoured by it, it is ready for more; it is one of the four things which never have enough. The place where Gog is said to be buried is called Hamongog, the multitude of Gog, (<sup>2391</sup>Ezekiel 39:11); and by the Septuagint there Polyandron, which is the name the Greeks give to a burying place, because many men are buried there; and with the Latins the dead are called Plures<sup>f761</sup>, the many, or the more; and yet the grave is never satisfied with them, (<sup>2106</sup>Proverbs 30:16). Or hell, the place of everlasting damnation and destruction, is meant, which has received multitudes of souls already, and where there is room for more, nor will it be full until the last day;

*so the eyes of man are never satisfied*; as not the eyes of his body with seeing corporeal objects, but still are desirous of seeing more, and indeed everything that is to be seen, and are never glutted, (<sup>2108</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:8); so neither the eyes of the carnal mind, or the lusts of it, which are insatiable things, let the objects of them be what they will; as in an ambitious man, a covetous person, or an unclean one.

**Ver. 21.** [*As*] *the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold*, etc.] For the trying, proving, and purifying these metals; (see <sup>2108</sup>Proverbs 17:3);

*so [is] a man to his praise*; or “according to the mouth of his praise”<sup>f762</sup>; if his own mouth praises him, as in (<sup><3170></sup>Proverbs 27:2);, he is known to be what he is, a foolish and vainglorious person: or “so a man is proved by the mouth of him that praises him”, as the Vulgate Latin version; or “of them that praise him”, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and so the Targum: the meaning is, either a man is known by the persons that praise him, according to what their characters are; if he is praised by good and virtuous men, he may be thought to be so himself; and if by wicked men, he may be concluded to be so likewise; (see <sup><3184></sup>Proverbs 28:4); or he is known by the effect that praise has upon him; if it swells him with pride, and makes him haughty, conceited, and overbearing, he will appear to be a weak and foolish man; but if he continues modest and humble, and studious and diligent to answer his character, thankful to God for what he has, and to whom he gives all the glory, he will approve himself a wise and good man.

**Ver. 22.** *Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle*, etc.] As the manna was, (<sup><0410></sup>Numbers 11:8); and as wheat beat and bruised in a mortar, or ground in a mill, retains its own nature; so, let a wicked man be used ever so roughly or severely, by words, admonitions, reproofs, and counsels; or by deeds, by corrections and punishment, by hard words or blows, whether publicly or privately; in the midst of the congregation, as the Targum and Syriac version; or of the sanhedrim and council, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions;

*[yet] will not his foolishness depart from him*; his inbred depravity and natural malignity and folly will not remove, nor will he leave his course of sinning he has been accustomed to; he is stricken in vain, he will revolt more and more, (<sup><2016></sup>Isaiah 1:5 <sup><2468></sup>Jeremiah 5:3 13:23). Anaxarchus the philosopher was ordered by the tyrant Nicocreon to be pounded to death in a stone mortar with iron pestles<sup>f763</sup>, and which he endured with great patience.

**Ver. 23.** *Be thou diligent to know the state of flocks*, etc.] In what condition they are; what health they enjoy; how fat and fruitful they be; what pasturage they have; and that they want nothing fitting for them that can be had and is necessary; and also the number of them. The calling of the shepherd is here particularly mentioned, because valiant, honourable, innocent, and useful; but the same diligence is to be used in all other callings and business men are employed in, that they may provide for

themselves and their families. It is in the original text, “the face of thy flocks”<sup>f764</sup>; perhaps the allusion is to the exact and distinct knowledge some very diligent careful shepherds might have, so as to know each sheep in their flocks distinctly; see (~~430B~~ John 10:3); The Septuagint version renders it, the souls of thy flock, as if it was an instruction to spiritual pastors or shepherds, who have the care of the souls of men: and certain it is, that if it is the duty of shepherds in common to be diligent in looking after their sheep, and doing everything the duty of their office requires; then it must become the indispensable duty of pastors of churches to take heed to the flock of God committed to them, and to look into their state and condition, and provide for them, and feed them with knowledge and understanding, (~~40B~~ Acts 20:28);

*[and] look well to thy herds*; or, “put thy heart”<sup>f765</sup> to them: show a cordial regard for them, and take a hearty care of them, that they have everything needful for them; and which is for the owner’s good as well as theirs.

**Ver. 24.** *For riches [are] not for ever*, etc.] A man cannot be assured of the continuance of them; they are uncertain things, here today and gone tomorrow: wherefore, though a man has a considerable share of them, yet should follow one calling or another; particularly husbandry is recommended, or keeping sheep and cattle, which are increasing; by which means his substance will be continued and augmented, which otherwise is not to be depended on, but in a diligent attendance to business;

*and doth the crown [endure] to every generation?* the royal crown, that is not to be depended upon; a king that wears a crown is not sure he shall always wear it, or that it shall be continued to his family one generation after another. And it is suggested, that it is not even beneath such persons to have a regard to their flocks and herds, and the increase of their riches in this way: the Chinese kings, many of them, formerly employed themselves in husbandry, and set examples of industry and diligence to their subjects<sup>f766</sup>; King Hezekiah provided himself possessions of flocks and herds in abundance, (~~42B~~ 2 Chronicles 32:28,29).

**Ver. 25.** *The hay appeareth, and the tender grass showeth itself*, etc.] Some think this is mentioned to illustrate the uncertainty of riches, which soon vanish away; as the tender grass shows itself, and is presently cut down and quickly appears hay, and that soon consumed; but rather this contains an argument to take to the pastoral life and calling, since it may be performed with so much ease; for the earth, the valleys and hills, are

covered with grass for the cattle; so that there is no further trouble than to drive the flocks into the pastures, and feed them there; or to cut down the grass, and make hay of it, and lay it up against the winter for fodder for them. The first clause, I think, may be rendered, “the hay removes”<sup>f767</sup>, or is carried off; the grass being fit to cut, is mowed and made hay of, and that is carried off and laid up for the winter: “and the tender grass showeth itself”; springs up after the hay is carried off and so makes a second crop; or, however, becomes good pasture for cattle to feed on;

*and herbs of the mountains are gathered*; for the present use of the cattle; or being made hay of, are laid up for future use; or are gathered for medicine; many of this kind grow on mountains.

**Ver. 26.** *The lambs [are] for thy clothing*, etc.] This is another argument, exciting to diligence in the pastoral calling, taken from the profit arising from it: the wool of the lambs, or rather “sheep”, as many versions render it; of it cloth is made, and of that garments to be worn, to keep decent, warm, and comfortable; (see <sup><8811></sup>Job 31:20);

*and the goats [are] the price of thy field*: these, being brought up and sold, furnish the husbandman with money to purchase more fields to feed his cattle on. The Targum is,

“the goats are for negotiation;”

with the price of them a man may purchase any of the necessities of life for himself and family; these are negotiated, (<sup><8571></sup>Ezekiel 27:21); the Syriac version is, “the goats are for thy food”; and so, between both the sheep and goats, man has both food and raiment; though his food is particularly mentioned in (<sup><3171></sup>Proverbs 27:27).

**Ver. 27.** *And [thou shalt have] goats’ milk enough for thy food*, etc.] The word for “goats”, in (<sup><3176></sup>Proverbs 27:26), signifies he goats, which were sold to buy fields, pay servants or rent, or purchase the necessities of life; and this here signifies she goats, which were kept for their milk; and which was daily used for food in some countries, and is still in use for the same purpose in some parts of our kingdoms; and in medicine it has been preferred by some physicians above others, next to the milk of women<sup>f768</sup>: and the diligent husbandman is promised not only plenty of this his own eating, at least a sufficiency of it, but for his family;

*for the food of thy household*; his wife and children:



*and [for] maintenance for thy maidens:* or “the lives”<sup>f769</sup> of them, on which they should live; for, though menservants might require strong meat yet the maidens might live upon milk; besides, Athenaeus<sup>f770</sup> speaks of most delicious cheese made of goats’ milk, called “tromilicus”. The design of the whole is to show that a man diligent in his business shall have a sufficiency for himself and his family; and, though it may be but the meaner sort of food and clothing he may get, yet, having food and raiment, he should therewith be content.