

CHAPTER 28

Ver. 1. *The wicked flee when no man pursueth*, etc.] Through the terrors of a guilty conscience, as in Cain and others; who fear where no immediate cause of fear is, are frightened with their own shadows; and as Gaal was with the shadow of the mountains, he took for an army of men, as his friend told him, (^{<0026>}Judges 9:36); they are chased with the sound of a shaken leaf, and fancy men are at their heels to destroy them, and therefore with all haste flee to some place of safety; (see ^{<0357>}Leviticus 26:17,36) (^{<0357>}Deuteronomy 28:7,25);

but the righteous are bold as a lion; which turns not away from any creature it meets with, nor mends its pace when it is pursued, but walks on intrepidly, and oftentimes lies down and sleeps in open places, and as securely as in woods and dens, being devoid of all fear; hence the heart of a valiant man is said to be as the heart of a lion, (^{<0070>}2 Samuel 17:10); (see ^{<0330>}Proverbs 30:30); so Pindar^{f771} compares a courageous man to a lion for boldness. Now righteous men are as bold as this creature, or more so; some of them have stopped the mouths of lions, and have dwelt securely in the midst of them, as righteous Daniel: and all righteous men are or may be as fearless as the lion; fear God they do, but have no reason to fear any other; and many of them are fearless of men, of their menaces and reproaches, or of anything they can do to them; since not only angels are their guardians, but God is on their side, and Christ has overcome the world for them: they are fearless of Satan and his principalities; they are delivered out of his hands; they know he is a coward, though a roaring lion, and when resisted will flee from thorn; yea, that he is a chained, conquered, enemy: and, though they are afraid of committing sin, yet are fearless of the damning power of it; Christ having bore their sins, made satisfaction for thong; for whose sake they are pardoned; and whose righteousness justifies and blood cleanses from all sin: they are fearless of death; its sting being removed, itself abolished as a penal evil, and become a blessing, and is the righteous man's, gain: they are fearless of wrath to come; Christ having delivered them from it, and they being justified by his blood: they are courageous as the lion in fighting the Lord's battles with sin, Satan, and the world, and in enduring hardness as good soldiers of Christ; knowing their cause is good, that Christ is the Captain of their salvation, their spiritual armour is proved, and they are sure of victory and

of a crown They are “confident”^[772] as the lion, as the word may be rendered; they are confident of the love of God, of their interest in Christ, of the grace of God in their hearts, and that all things work together for their good; and that it is, and always will be, well with them, let things go how they will in the world, and so are secure. They are bold and undaunted, both before God and men; before God in prayer, knowing him to be their covenant God in Christ, having in view the blood and righteousness of Christ, and being assisted by his Spirit: and they are undaunted before men; if the righteous man is a minister of the word, he speaks it boldly, as it ought to be spoken, fearing the faces of none, knowing it to be the Gospel of Christ, the truth, as it is in him, and the power of God to salvation; and if a private Christian, he is a public professor of Christ, this word and ordinances, which he is not ashamed to own before all the world; in short, the righteous are bold in life and in death, and will be so in the day of judgment; and it is their righteousness which makes them so, from which they are denominated righteous, even not their own, but the righteousness of Christ.

Ver. 2. *For the transgression of a land many [are] the princes thereof,* etc.] Either together; that is, reigning princes, such as lay claim to the crown, and usurp it; otherwise it is a happiness to a nation to have many princes of the blood, to inherit in succession, to support the crown in their family, and defend a nation, and study the good of it; but it is a judgment to a nation when many rise up as competitors for rule, or do rule, as at Athens, where thirty tyrants sprung up at once; by which factions and parties are made, and which issue in oppression, rapine, and murder: or successively, very quickly, one after another, being dethroned the one by the other: or removed by death, as in the land of Israel, in the times of the judges, and of the kings of Israel and Judah, after the revolt of the ten tribes; which frequent changes produce different administrations, new laws, and fresh taxes, disagreeable to the people; and oftentimes children come to be their princes, which is always reckoned an infelicity to a nation; see (^{<21106>}Ecclesiastes 10:16 ^{<21B2>}Isaiah 3:12); and all this is usually for some national sin or sins indulged to, which draw upon a people the divine resentment, and provoke God to suffer such changes among there;

but by a man of understanding [and] knowledge the state [thereof] shall be prolonged, either by a set of wise and understanding, good and virtuous men, who will oppose the growing vice and immoralities of a people, and form themselves into societies for the reformation of manners; the word

“man” being taken collectively for a body of men: or by a wise and prudent minister or ministry, or a set of civil magistrates, who will show themselves to be terrors to evildoers, and a praise to them that do well: or by a wise and prudent prince, who seeks to establish his throne by judgment and mercy; who will take care that justice and judgment be executed in the land, and that vice and profaneness be discouraged; by means of such, the state of a kingdom, which seemed near to ruin, will be prolonged, and the happiness and prosperity of it secured and established; and God, in mercy to it, may long preserve the life of their king, will being a good one, a long reign is always a happiness to a nation. And to this sense is the Vulgate Latin version, “the life of the prince shall be longer”; and the Targum, which is,

“and the sons of men that understand knowledge shall endure;”

(see ²⁰⁹⁵Ecclesiastes 9:15).

Ver. 3. *A poor man that oppresseth the poor*, etc.] Either one that is poor at the time he oppresses another like himself, either by secret fraud or open injury; from whom the oppressed can get no redress, as sometimes he may and does from a rich man: or rather one that has been poor, but now become rich, and got into some place of authority and profit, who should remember what he had been; and it might be expected that such an one would put on bowels of compassion towards the poor, as knowing what it was to be in indigent circumstances; but if, instead of this, he exercises his authority over the poor in a severe and rigid manner, and oppresses them, and squeezes that little out of them they have: he

[is like] a sweeping rain which leaveth no food: like a violent hasty shower of rain; which, instead of watering the seed, herbs, and plants, and causing them to grow, as moderate rain does, it washes away the very seed sown in the earth, or beats out the ripe corn from the ears, or beats it down, so that it riseth not up again; the effect of which is, there is no bread to the eater, nor seed to the sower, and consequently a famine. The design of the proverb is, to show how unnatural as well as intolerable is the oppression of the poor, by one that has been poor himself; even as it is contrary to the nature and use of rain, which is to fructify, and not to sweep away and destroy; and which when it does, there is no standing against it or diverting it.

Ver. 4. *They that forsake the law praise the wicked*, etc.] Who are like them; who forsake and transgress the law, as they do; every like loves its like; wicked men delight in sin, the transgression of the law, and in those that do it. One covetous man will bless and praise another, whom the Lord abhors, and commend his covetousness as frugality and good husbandry: one proud man will call another happy, and praise him as a man of spirit, that will not debase himself, but keep up his authority, rank, and dignity, and not condescend to men of low estates; the workers of wickedness are set up and extolled, and tempters of God, men of atheistical and deistical principles, are not only delivered from the punishment they deserve, but are commended for their bold spirits; (see ^{<9018>}Psalm 10:3 ^{<3015>}Malachi 3:15). Or, “every wicked man praises those that forsake the law”, so Schultens;

but such as keep the law contend with them; that is, with them that forsake it and praise the wicked; they are displeased with them, and show their resentment at them; they tend with them by arguments, and endeavour to convince them of their folly and wickedness; they prove them for it, even though they may be in high places, as John the Baptist reprov'd Herod. The Targum is,

“they contend with them, that they may return,”

or be converted; they strive and take pains with them, to convince them and bring them to repentance, and to a change of sentiments, life, and manners.

Ver. 5. *Evil men understand not judgment*, etc.] Or, “men of wickedness”^{<1773>}; that are under the governing power of it; who are given up and give up themselves unto it; who, like Ahab, sell themselves to work wickedness: these know not what is just and right between man and man, at least not to do it; they know it not practically; they are wise to do evil, but to do good have no knowledge, (^{<2402>}Jeremiah 4:22); they know not the law of God, the rule of judgment, justice, and equity; at least not the extensiveness and spirituality of it, (^{<2407>}Jeremiah 8:7); and much less the Gospel of Christ, which is sometimes so called, (^{<2301>}Isaiah 42:1,4 51:4). Nor do they notice, as they should, to the judgments of God in the earth; they do not consider his work, and the operation of his hand; the vengeance he takes on wicked men, so Jarchi interprets it; nor do they take any notice of the judgment to come, at which they must appear, and into which they will be brought, and all things done by them;

but they that seek the Lord understand all [things]; this character describes all good men that seek the Lord, in private and in public, that seek him by prayer and supplication, that wait upon him in the ordinances of his house; and all sensible sinners, who seek to Christ for righteousness, for rest, for life and salvation, for more grace from him, for more communion with him, for a greater degree of knowledge of him, and for immortality and eternal life, his kingdom and glory. And such “understand all things”; not in the most full and absolute sense; for this is proper and peculiar to God: nor all things natural and civil, which truly righteous persons, generally speaking, have the least share of, as arts, sciences, languages, trade and commerce in all its branches; and indeed universal knowledge of these things does not belong to anyone man: nor all things in a religious sense; not all the difficult passages of Scripture, in which there are many things hard to be understood; but all things necessary to salvation; all things relating to their fallen, depraved, and miserable state and condition by nature, and to the way and means of their recovery and salvation by Christ; all things relating to a spiritual and saving knowledge of God in Christ; and to the knowledge of the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and to the work of the Spirit of God upon the heart; and of the doctrines of the Gospel, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, and so as to be food for their souls: and which understanding is given them, and they attain unto and increase in, by seeking the Lord, and using the means of knowledge, the word and ordinances; (see ^{<4215>}1 Corinthians 2:15 ^{<4221>}1 John 2:20,27). The Targum and Syriac version render it,

“that understand all good things;”

and so Aben Ezra interprets it: the Arabic version is, “they understand it in all things”; that is, judgment, justice, and equity, in all its branches, and practise it.

Ver. 6. *Better [is] the poor that walketh in his uprightness*, etc.] (See Gill on ^{<4200>}Proverbs 19:1”);

than [he that is] perverse [in his] ways, though he [be] rich; or, “in [his] two ways”^{<774>}: that halts between two ways, or makes use of both; sometimes turns to the one, to the right hand, and sometimes to the other, to the left hand; or that pretends to the one, and walks in the other; would be thought to be a virtuous and religious man, and to walk in the paths of righteousness and truth, when he walks in those of sin and wickedness. And now a poor man that walks evenly and uprightly, according to the

word of God and truth of the Gospel, in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, and in the paths of faith and holiness, is better than he; more honourable, more comfortable, and happy in life and in death; he has grace now, and will have glory hereafter.

Ver. 7. *Whoso keepeth the law [is] a wise son,* etc.] That observes the law of God; for, though he cannot perfectly keep it, yet he delights in it after the inward man; and with his spirit serves it, from a principle of love, in faith, and with a view to the glory of God, without mercenary and sinister ends. Such a man enjoys peace, and has a reward “in” though not “for” keeping the commands of it; so that it is his wisdom to observe it; and he may be truly called a wise man, (^{<1006>}Deuteronomy 4:6); Or that observes the law or commandments of his parents, which they enjoin him; (see ^{<1007>}Proverbs 6:20,21); and particularly the law of God, which requires honour and obedience to be given to parents, and which turns to the account of children; it is well with them, and their days are prolonged on earth, and therefore they are wise that keep it, (^{<1008>}Ephesians 6:1-3); and such a wise son makes a glad father, as the contrary brings shame to him, as in the next clause;

but he that is a companion of riotous [men] shameth his father: that keeps company with gluttons, and indulges his sensual appetite with them; that “feeds”^{f775} such persons and himself, as some render the word; that gives up himself to an epicurean life: he brings himself at last to disgrace and poverty, and so causes shame to his father; who will be charged with neglecting his education, and indulging him in such a luxurious way of living; (see ^{<1005>}Proverbs 10:5 29:15).

Ver. 8. *He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance,* etc.] By biting and oppressing the poor; letting him have money at an exorbitant interest, and goods at an exorbitant price, and so increases his substance in this scandalous manner; hence usury is in (^{<1026>}Leviticus 25:36), called “increase”, and by the Greeks *τοκος*, a “birth”, because money is the birth of money, as Aristotle^{f776} observes; and so by the Latins “foenus”, as if it was “foetus”,^{f777} “a birth”. The word for usury here signifies biting; and so usury, with classical writers^{f778}, is said to bite; and while it increases the substance of the usurer, it lessens and devours that of others;

he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor; not for himself, nor for his posterity; but for such, though not intentionally but eventually, as will make a good use of it, and distribute it to the necessities of the poor. The

meaning is, that things should be so overruled by the providence of God, that what such an avaricious man gets in his dishonest way should not be enjoyed by him or his; but should be taken out of his hands, and put into the hands of another, that will do good with it, by showing mercy to the poor; see (^{<182716>}Job 27:16,17).

Ver. 9. *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law*, etc.] Not merely the moral law, but the word of God in general, and any and every doctrine of it; though the law is to be heard and attended to, what it commands and forbids, its precepts, menaces, and curses: indeed the Spirit of God is not received by the hearing of the law, nor does faith come by that; but by hearing the word of God, particularly the Gospel; which yet then turn away their ears from, and are turned to fables, and choose to hearken to anything rather than that; and, like the deaf adder, stop their ears to the voice of the charmer, charming ever so wisely; the folly and sad effects of which will be seen when too late;

even his prayer [shall be] abomination; that is, to God; not only his ungodly actions, but even his outward exercises of religion, which carry in them some show of goodness and holiness; and particularly his prayer to God, which in upright persons is the delight of the Lord; yet in such an one it will be abhorred by him; when he is in distress, and shall pray to the Lord, he will not only turn a deaf ear to him, as he has to his law or word, but he will despise and abhor him and his prayer; because he has set at nought his counsel, and despised his reproof, (^{<31024>}Proverbs 1:24-28).

Ver. 10. *Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way*, etc.] That is, who attempts to deceive them, and draw them into errors or immoralities, and so into a snare, into mischief and ruin; first into the evil of sin, in order to bring them into the evil of punishment; I say, who attempts to do it; for it is not possible that God's elect, those who are truly righteous and good, should be totally and finally deceived, (^{<4124>}Matthew 24:24);

he shall fall himself into his own pit; which he had dug and prepared for the righteous, who through the grace and goodness of God is preserved from it; the mischief intended for the good man falls upon himself in righteous, judgment, (^{<310715>}Psalms 7:15,16);

but the upright shall have, good [things] in possession; or "shall inherit good things"^{<1779>}; they are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and shall

inherit all things; they have all good things in Christ, with him and from him now; nor can they be taken from them, or they be caused to lose them by all the policy and craft of men and devils, who seek to draw them into sin and snares with that view; but, notwithstanding all their efforts, they shall keep possession of their good things here, the grace of the spirit, and the blessings of grace, and shall enjoy glory hereafter.

Ver. 11. *The rich man [is] wise in his own conceit*, etc.] Ascribing his getting riches to his great sagacity, wisdom, and prudence; and being flattered with it by dependents on him;

but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out: a man of good understanding, whether in things natural, civil, moral, or spiritual, though poor, as a man may be poor and yet a wise man; such an one, when he comes into company with a rich man, wise in his own conceit, he soon by conversation with him finds him out to be a very foolish man, and exposes him as one; for riches are not always to men of understanding, or all that have them are not such; and better is a poor wise man than even a foolish king; (see ^{<2091>}Ecclesiastes 9:11,15 4:13).

Ver. 12. *When righteous [men] do rejoice, [there is] great glory*, etc.] When it is well with them; when they are in prosperous circumstances; when they are countenanced and encouraged by the government under which they are; when they have the free exercise of their religion; and especially when they are advanced to places of profit, honour, and trust, which must make them cheerful and joyful; it is a glory to a land, it adds greatly to the glory of it, and a fine prospect there is of the increase and continuance of it;

but when the wicked rise: to honour and dignity, and are set in high places, and are in great power and authority, which they exercise to the distress of the righteous and all good men:

a man is hidden: a good man; he hides himself, as in (^{<1838>}Proverbs 28:28); he withdraws himself from court, from city, from company, from commerce, and business, because of the tyranny and persecution of wicked men; and flees to distant places, and wanders in deserts and mountains, in caves and dens of the earth; as some saints, under the Old Testament, did, and as the Church, in Gospel times, fled from the tyranny of antichrist into the wilderness, to hide herself: or, “a man is” or “shall be sought for”^{>f780}, and searched out; as wicked persecutors are very diligent to search for and

find out such persons that hide themselves, and fetch them out of their hiding places, and cruelly use them.

Ver. 13. *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper*, etc.] God may cover a man's sins, and it is an instance of his grace, and it is the glory of it to do it, but a man may not cover his own: it is right in one good man to cover the sins of another, reprovng him secretly, and freely forgiving him; but it is wrong in a man to cover his own: not that any man is bound to accuse himself before a court of judicature, or ought to expose his sins to the public, which would be to the hurt of his credit, and to the scandal of religion; but whenever he is charged with sin, and reprovd for it by his fellow Christian, he should not cover it, that is, he should own it; for not to own and acknowledge it is to cover it; he should not deny it, which is to cover it with a lie, and is adding sin to sin; nor should he justify it, as if he had done a right thing; nor extenuate or excuse it, or impute it to others that drew him into it, as Adam, which is called a covering transgression, as Adam, (^{<4813>}Job 31:33); for such a man "shall not prosper"; in soul or body, in things temporal or spiritual; he shall not have peace of mind and conscience; but, sooner or later, shall feel the stings it; he shall not succeed even in those things he has in view by covering his sins; he shall not be able to cover them long, for there is nothing covered but what shall be revealed; if not in this life, which yet often is, however at the day of judgment, when every secret thing shall be made manifest; nor shall he escape the shame and punishment he thought to avoid by covering it, as may be observed in the case of Achan, (^{<4871>}Joshua 7:11-25); in short, he shall have no mercy shown him by God or man, as appears by the antithesis in the next clause;

but whoso confesseth and forsaketh [them] shall have mercy; who confesses them to men privately and publicly, according to the nature of the offences, from whom they find mercy; but not to a priest, in order for absolution, which no man can give; sin is only in this sense to be confessed to God, against it is committed, and who only can pardon it; and though it is known unto him, yet he requires an acknowledgment of it, which should be done from the heart, with an abhorrence of the sin, and in the faith of Christ, as a sacrifice for it; and it is not enough to confess, there must be a forsaking likewise, a parting with sin, a denying of sinful self, a leaving the former course of sin, and a quitting the company of wicked men before used to, and an abstaining from all appearance of evil; as is and will be the case, where there is a true sight and sense of sin, and the grace of God takes place: and such find "mercy", pardoning grace and mercy, or pardon

in a way of mercy, and not merit; for though the sinner confesses and forsakes it, it is not that which merits pardon and mercy in God, who is rich in it, delights in showing it, and from whom it may be hoped for and expected by all such persons; see (~~1915~~ Psalm 32:5 ~~600~~ 1 John 1:9). So the Targum and Syriac version, God will have mercy on him.

Ver. 14. *Happy [is] the man that feareth always*, etc.] Not men, but the Lord; there is a fear and reverence due to men, according to the stations in which they are; but a slavish fear of man, and which deters from the worship of God and obedience to him, is criminal, and brings a snare; and a man, under the influence of it, cannot be happy: nor is a servile fear of God intended, a fear of wrath and damnation, or a distrust of his grace, a continual calling in question his love, and an awful apprehension of his displeasure and vengeance; for in such fear is torment, and with it a man can never be happy; but it is a reverence and godly fear, a filial one, a fear of God and his goodness, which he puts into the hearts of his people; a fear, indeed, of offending him, of sinning against him, by which a man departs from evil, and forsakes it, as well as confesses it; but is what arises from a sense of his goodness: and it is well when such a fear of God is always before the eyes and on the hearts of men; in their closets and families, in their trade and commerce, in all companies into which they come, as, well as in the house of God and the assembly of his saints, where he is to be feared; as also in prosperity and adversity, even throughout the whole course of life, passing the time of their sojourning here in fear: and such a man is happy; the eye of God is on him, his heart is towards him, and he delights it, him; his secret is with him, he sets a guard of angels about him, has laid up goodness for him, and communicates largely to him;

but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief; that hardens his heart from the fear of the Lord; neither confesses his sin, nor forsakes it; bids, as it were, defiance to heaven, strengthens and hardens himself in his wickedness, and by his hard and impenitent heart treasures up to himself wrath against the day of wrath; he falls “into evil”,^{f781} as it may be rendered, into the evil of sin yet more and more, which the hardness of his heart brings him into, and so into the evil of punishment here and hereafter.

Ver. 15. *[As] a roaring lion, and a ranging bear*, etc.] Which are both terrible; the lion that roars for want of food, or when it is over its prey; and the bear, when it runs from place to place in quest of provision, being “hungry [and very] desirous” of food, has a keen appetite, as some think

the word^{f782} signifies. The Targum and Jarchi take it to be expressive of the cry and roaring it makes at such a time, as well as the lion; (see ^{<2891>}Isaiah 59:11); so the Tigurine version. “Roaring” is the proper epithet of a lion, and is frequently given it in Scripture, and in other writers^{f783}; and the bear, it is to have its name, in the Oriental language, from the growling and murmuring noise it makes when hungry; hence that of Horace^{f784};

[so is] a wicked ruler over the poor people; one that rules over them in a tyrannical manner, sadly oppresses them, takes away the little from them they have, which is very cruel and barbarous; when he ought to protect and defend them, against whom they cannot stand, and whom they dare not resist; and who therefore must be as terrible to them, being as cruel and voracious as the above animals. Tyrants are frequently compared to lions, (^{<3407>}Jeremiah 4:7 50:17 ^{<3507>}2 Timothy 4:17); and the man of sin, the wicked ruler and great oppressor of God’s poor people, is compared to both; his feet are as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion, (^{<6112>}Revelation 13:2).

Ver. 16. *The prince that wanteth understanding [is] also a great oppressor*, etc.] Or, “much in oppressions”^{f785}; he multiplies them, and abounds in them; he distresses his subjects in a variety of ways and methods he uses to extort money from them by which he shows his want of understanding: he is a wise prince that uses gentle methods, and gains the affections of his people, and who cheerfully supports his crown and government with honour and glory; but he is a foolish prince that uses them with rigour. It may be rendered, “and a prince that wanteth understanding, and is much”, or “abounds, in oppressions”; in laying heavy burdens and taxes on his people, in an arbitrary manner; “shall shorten, and not prolong his days”^{f786}, as it may be supplied from the next clause; either his subjects will rise up against him, and dethrone him, and destroy him; or God, in mercy to them, and in judgment to him, will remove him by death;

[but] he that hateth covetousness shall prolong [his] days; to hate covetousness is a good qualification of a civil magistrate, prince, or ruler, (^{<0282>}Exodus 18:21). This sin is the cause of a wicked prince oppressing his subjects; but where it is hated, which is seen by moderation in government, and easing of the people as much as possible; such a prince, as he has the hearts of his subjects, is well pleasing to God, by whom he reigns; and such an one, through the prayers of the people for him, and the goodness of

God unto him, lives long, and reigns prosperously; and dies, as David, in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour.

Ver. 17. *A man that doeth violence to the blood of [any] person,* etc.]

That sheds the blood of any in a violent manner; that lays violent hands upon a club, and takes away his life, contrary to the law in (^{<0006>}Genesis 9:6). Or, “that is pressed because of the blood of any person”^{f787}; pressed in his own mind; filled with horror, and tortured in his conscience, for the innocent blood he has shed: the letter “daleth” in the word “Adam” is lesser than usual; and Vitranga, on (^{<396>}Isaiah 34:6); observes, that it signifies a man red with blood, oppressed in his conscience, and depressed by God, which this minute letter is a symbol of; and thinks it applicable to Edom or Rome: or it signifies one pressed, pursued, and dose followed by the avenger of blood;

shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him; support or help him. When such a murderer flees, and is pursued, and unawares falls into a pit, or is like to do so, let no man warn him of it, or help him out of it; or if he flees to a pit to hide himself, let no man hold him or detain him there, or suffer him to continue in such a lurking place, but discover him or pluck him out; or, if he is a fugitive and a vagabond all his days, as Cain, the murderer of his brother, was, till he comes to the pit of the grave, let no man yield him any support or sustenance.

Ver. 18. *Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved,* Or “be safe”^{f788} from those that seek his life, plot against him, shoot at him, as the wicked do at the upright in heart, but the Lord protects him; and it is even well with him in times of public calamities; the Lord has his chambers and hiding places for him; and he is safe from falling, as may be gathered from the opposite clause; for he walks surely, and is in the hands of Christ, and is kept by him from a final and total falling away: and he shall be saved also with an everlasting salvation; from sin, and all the effects of it; from the curse of the law, from wrath to come, from hell and damnation. Not that his upright walk is the cause of this; the moving cause of salvation is the grace of God; the procuring cause, our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Author of it: but this is a descriptive character of the persons that are and shall be saved; it is a clear case that such have the grace of God, and therefore shall have glory; (see Gill on “^{<309>}Proverbs 10:9”);

but [he that is] perverse [in his] ways; “in his two ways”, as in (^{<076>}Proverbs 27:6); or many ways, and all perverse and wicked:

shall fall at once; his destruction shall come suddenly upon him, when he is not aware of it, and when he cries, Peace, peace, to himself: or in one of them; in one or other of his perverse ways.

Ver. 19. *He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread*, etc.] Or, “shall he filled” or “satisfied with bread”^{f789}: shall have bread enough, and to spare; provisions of all sorts, and in great plenty; (see Gill on “^{<3021>}Proverbs 12:11”);

but he that followeth, after vain [persons]; empty idle persons; keeps company and spends his time with them, when he should be about the business of his calling:

shall have poverty enough; or be “filled with [it]”^{f790}; he shall be exceeding poor, reduced to the utmost distress, be clothed in rags and destitute of daily food.

Ver. 20. *A faithful man shall abound with blessings*, etc.] Or, “a man of faithfulness”^{f791}. A very faithful man, that is truly so; that is so in a moral sense; true to his work, makes good his promises, fulfils his contracts, abides by the obligations he lays himself under; is faithful in every trust reposed in him, be it greater or lesser matters, in every station in which it is, and throughout the whole course of his life. Such a man abounds with the blessings and praises of men; all value him, and speak well of him: and with the blessings of divine Providence; he is “much [in] blessings”^{f792}, as it may be rendered; as in receiving blessings from God, so in giving them to men; such a man is usually charitable and beneficent. And it may be understood of one that is faithful, in a spiritual and evangelic sense; for of such characters are the followers of the Lamb, (^{<6674>}Revelation 17:14). It is in the original, “a man of truths”^{f793}; one that has the truth of grace in him; that knows the grace of God in truth; with whom the truth of the Gospel is; who has learnt it, known it, embraced it, values it, and abides by it; and who has a concern with Christ, who is the truth, who is formed, lives, and dwells in his heart; of whom he has made a good profession, and holds it fast, and whom he cleaves unto. The character of “faithful” belongs both to the true ministers of Christ, who preach the pure Gospel, and the whole of it; who seek not to please men, but God; and not themselves, and their own glory, but the things of Christ, and his glory; and continue to do so in the face of all opposition: and to private Christians, the faithful in Christ Jesus; who truly believe in him, stand by his truths, abide by his ordinances, and are faithful to one another, and continue so till death: these abound with

the blessings of the covenant of grace, with all spiritual blessings in Christ, with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ; they have an abundance of grace in them, given them in conversion, faith, hope, love, humility, and many other graces, in the exercise of which they are made to abound; and they have an abundance of blessings of grace bestowed on them, pardon of sin, a justifying righteousness, adoption, meetness for and right unto eternal life; they have Christ, and all things along with him; so that they may be truly said to have all things, and abound;

but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent; he that is over anxious, and immoderately desirous of being rich, and pursues every method of obtaining his desires, with all his might and main; that labours night and day for it; though he takes no criminal nor unlawful methods, properly so called, nor does he do anything injurious to others, yet he is not innocent; that too much anxiety in him is criminal; nor is he free from covetousness; (see ^{<2304>}Proverbs 23:4); and if he uses any unjust and unlawful means to acquire wealth, and resolves to be rich, right or wrong, “per fas, per nefas”, he shall not be innocent, neither before God nor men: so the Targum renders it,

“he that runs into iniquity, that he may be rich;”

and indeed when a man hastily, or in a short time, becomes rich, though he cannot be directly charged with fraud and injustice, yet he is not innocent in the minds of men, or free from their suspicious and jealousies of him. A man that makes haste to be rich is opposed to him that is faithful and true to his word and contracts, and is the same that Juvenal^{f794} calls “avarus properans”; (see ^{<5409>}1 Timothy 6:9,10).

Ver. 21. *To have respect of persons [is] not good, &c*, In courts of judicature, to give a cause or pass sentence in favour of a person, because he is rich, or is a relation, a friend, an acquaintance, or has done a kindness; and against another, because of the reverse, (^{<1895>}Leviticus 19:15) (^{<6169>}Deuteronomy 16:19); nor in religious assemblies, making a difference between the rich and the poor, (^{<3001>}James 2:1,2); this is not good in itself, nor productive of good effects, and cannot be well pleasing to God, who himself is no respecter of persons;

for for a piece of bread [that] man will transgress; the laws of God and men; having used himself to such unrighteous methods of proceeding, he

will do any base action for a small gain, he will stick at nothing, and do it for anything; as Cato used to say of M. Coelius the tribune,

“that he might be hired, for a morsel of bread, to speak or hold his peace;”

(see ~~433~~ Ezekiel 13:19).

Ver. 22. *He that hasteth to be rich*, etc.] As every man that is eagerly desirous of riches is; he would be rich at once^{f795}, and cannot wait with any patience in the ordinary course of means:

[hath] an evil eye; on the substance of others, to get it, right or wrong; is an evil man, and takes evil methods to be rich^{f796}; see (~~510~~ 1 Timothy 6:9,10); or an envious one; is an envious man; as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; he envies others, as the Vulgate Latin version, the riches of other men; he grudges everything that goes beside himself; and that makes him in haste to be rich, that he may be equal to or superior to others: or he is a sordid, avaricious, illiberal man, that will not part with anything for the relief, for others, and is greedy of everything to amass wealth to himself; an evil eye is opposed to a good or bountiful one, that is, to a man that is liberal and generous, (~~410~~ Proverbs 22:9 ~~405~~ Matthew 20:15);

and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him; for wealth gotten hastily, and especially wrongfully, diminishes, wastes, and comes to nothing in the end; it sometimes flies away as fast as it comes; it has wings to do the one, as well as the other: this the man in haste to be rich does not consider, or he would have taken another method; since this is not the true way of getting and keeping riches, but of losing them, and coming to want; (see ~~431~~ Proverbs 13:11 20:21).

Ver. 23. *He that rebuketh a man*, etc.] His friend and acquaintance, for any fault committed by him; which reproof he gives in a free and faithful manner, yet kind, tender, and affectionate. The word rendered “afterwards”, which begins the next clause, according to the accents belongs to this, and is by some rendered, “he that rebuketh a man after me”;^{f797} after my directions, according to the rules I have given; that is, after God, and by his order; or Solomon, after his example, who delivered out these sentences and instructions. The Targum so connects the word, and renders the clause,

“he that rebukes a man before him;”

openly, to his thee: but rather it may be rendered “behind”; that is, as Cocceius interprets it, apart, alone, privately, and secretly, when they are by themselves; which agrees with Christ’s instructions, (^{<4085>}Matthew 18:15);

afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue; for though the reproofs given him may uneasy upon his mind at first, and may be cutting and wounding, and give him some pain, and so some dislike to the reprover; yet when he coolly considers the nature and tendency of the reproof, the manner in which it was given, and the design of it, he will love, value, and esteem his faithful friend and rebuker, more than the man that fawned upon him, and flattered him with having done that which was right and well; or, as the Targum, than he that divideth the tongue, or is doubletongued; and so the Syriac version; (see ^{<4076>}Proverbs 27:5,6 ^{<4080>}Psalms 141:3).

Ver. 24. *Whoso robbeth his father or his mother,* etc.] As Micah did of eleven hundred shekels of silver, (^{<4072>}Judges 17:2);

and saith, [it is] no transgression; what is his father’s or his mother’s is his own, or as good as his own, it will come to him at their death; and if he wants it before, he thinks he ought to have it; and if they are not willing to give it him, it is with him no sin to rob them of it; and this he says within himself, to quiet his conscience when he has done it; or to others who may charge him with it: but, whatever such a man thinks, sins against parents are greater than against others; as parricide is a greater sin than any other kind of murder, so robbing of parents is greater than any other kind of theft; it is more aggravated, especially when parents are aged, and cannot work for themselves, but depend on what they have for their livelihood; whereas a young man can, and ought, and should rather give to his parents than rob them of what they have;

the same [is] the companion of a destroyer; of a murderer; either he has got into such company which have put him upon such wicked practices; or he will soon get into such a society, and, from a robber of his father and mother, become a robber on the highway, and a murderer; and he has wickedness enough to be a destroyer of the lives of his parents, as well as of their substance; and sometimes the one sin leads to the other.

Ver. 25. *He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife,* etc.] Or, of a “large heart”^{<1798>}, or has an enlarged one; not with useful knowledge and

understanding, as Solomon had; nor a heart enlarged with love and affection to the souls of men, as the Apostle Paul had; but either has a covetous one, who enlarges its desire as hell, and is never satisfied with what he has, and so is continually contending with his neighbours, engaging in lawsuits for their property, or unwilling to pay his lawful debts; or of a proud spirit, and despises all around him, and cannot bear opposition and contradiction; and is of a wrathful and revengeful spirit, and always at variance with his neighbours and quarrelling with them; (see ^{<2085>}Proverbs 18:15);

but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat; that trusts in the Lord, both for things temporal and spiritual; does not covet his neighbour's goods, nor disturbs his peace, nor injures his person or property to increase his own, but depends upon the Lord for a supply of necessary good things; such an one shall be fat and flourishing, both in his temporal and spiritual estate; all he does shall prosper; he shall want no good thing, (^{<3841>}Psalm 84:11,12 ^{<2470>}Jeremiah 17:7, 8).

Ver. 26. *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool*, etc.] Since the thoughts and imaginations of the thoughts of the heart are only evil, and that continually; they are vain and vague, sinful and corrupt; the affections are inordinate, the conscience defiled, the understanding darkened, and the will perverse; there is no good thing in it, nor any that comes out of it, but all the reverse; it is deceitful and desperately wicked: he must be a fool, and not know the plague of his heart, that trusts in it; and even for a good man to be self-confident, and trust to the sincerity of his heart, as Peter did, or to the good frame of the heart, as many do, is acting a foolish part; and especially such are fools as the Scribes and Pharisees, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, when a man's best righteousness is impure and imperfect, and cannot justify him in the sight of God; it is moreover a weak and foolish part in men to trust to the wisdom and counsel of their heart, to lean to their own understanding, even it, things natural and civil, and not to ask wisdom of God, or take the advice of men, and especially it, things religious and sacred; (see ^{<2085>}Proverbs 3:5,6);

but whoso walketh wisely; as he does who walks according to the rule of the divine word; who makes the testimonies of the Lord his counsellors; who consults with his sacred writings, and follows the directions of them; who walks as he has Christ for his pattern and example, and makes the

Spirit of God his guide, and walks after him, and not after the flesh; who walks with wise men, and takes their advice in all matters of moment, not trusting to his own wisdom and knowledge; who walks as becomes the Gospel of Christ, and in all the ordinances of it; who walks inoffensively to all men, and so in wisdom towards them that are without, and in love to them who are within; who walks circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time;

he shall be delivered; he shall be delivered from the snares of his own deceitful heart, which he will not trust; and from the temptations of Satan; and from all afflictions and troubles he meets with in the way; and from a final and total falling away; and from eternal death and destruction: “he shall be saved”, as some versions render it, even with an everlasting salvation. The Targum is,

“he shall be protected from evil.”

Ver. 27. *He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack*, etc.] That gives alms unto them, relieves them in their distress, supplies them with money, food, or clothes, and does it cheerfully, largely, and liberally, as the case requires; such an one shall not want any good thing; he shall not be the poorer for what he gives; he shall not miss it, nor his substance be diminished; he shall not come to poverty and want, yea, he shall be enriched, and his substance increased, for more is intended than is expressed. Jarchi interprets this of a wise man not restraining doctrine from a disciple, but giving it to him liberally;

but he that hideth his eyes; that is, from the poor, as the Targum and Syriac version add; that does not care to see his person, to behold his miseries, or know his case, lest his heart should be moved with compassion, and should draw out anything from him; (see ²⁸⁰⁰Isaiah 58:7). Such an one

shall have many a curse; not only from the poor he hardens himself against, but from other persons, who observe his miserable and covetous disposition; and from the Lord himself, who abhors such persons, and curses their very blessings now, and will bid them depart from him as accursed persons hereafter.

Ver. 28. *When the wicked rise, men hide themselves*, etc.] When wicked men are raised to places of power and authority, rich men hide themselves, lest they should become a prey to them; and good men hide themselves,

that they may not be put to death by them; or as ashamed to behold their evil actions; (see Gill on “~~2182~~Proverbs 28:12”);

but when they perish; wicked men, either by a natural or violent death; or perish as to their authority and power, being turned out of their places:

the righteous increase; such who before hid themselves appear, and, being put into the places of the wicked, encourage truth and righteousness, by which means the number of good men is multiplied; and which is a great happiness to a nation, and shows the usefulness and advantage that good magistrates are of unto it.