

CHAPTER 30

Ver. 1. *The words of Agur the son of Jakeh*, etc.] Here begins, according to Aben Ezra, the fourth part of this book; though, according to others, it is the fifth; (see Gill on “^{<3027>}Proverbs 22:17”); Who this Agur was is a matter of doubt; some of the Jewish writers, as Jarchi and Gersom, and likewise some Christian writers^{f825}, take him to be Solomon himself, who calls himself Agur, which is said to signify “a gatherer”; and so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “the words of the gatherer, the son of the vomiter”; just as he calls himself Koheleth, or “the caller”, or “preacher”, (^{<2006>}Ecclesiastes 1:1,12). The reason given of this name is, because he gathered wisdom and the law^{f826}; or, as Jarchi, he gathered wisdom, and vomited it; that is, delivered it out to others; so he did, he sought after and attained to more wisdom than any before him, for he was wiser than all men; and it may be added, that he “gathered” silver and gold, and the treasure of kings, and increased in riches more than any before him, (^{<2013>}Ecclesiastes 1:13,16 2:8). But then all this does not agree with the person whose words these are; for he speaks of himself as being very ignorant, and as not having learned wisdom, (^{<3011>}Proverbs 30:2,3); and desires neither poverty nor riches, (^{<3018>}Proverbs 30:8); besides, the word “Agur” signifies not “a gatherer”, but “gathered”, as Hillerus^{f827} renders it; and so Cocceius, who thinks also that Solomon is meant, yet not for the above reasons, but translates the clause thus, “the words of the recollected son of the obedient”; as if it described Solomon the son of David, the obedient one, the man after God’s own heart, when he was restored by repentance; but it seems better, with Aben Ezra, to understand this of some very good, knowing, and worthy man, who lived in those times, either before the times of Solomon, or in the same, whose pithy sayings and sentences he had a great regard for, and joined them to his own; or who lived in the times of Hezekiah, or before, whose proverbs were collected by his men, and added to those of Solomon’s they had copied in the preceding chapters; (see ^{<3021>}Proverbs 25:1);

[even] the prophecy; or “burden”^{f828}, as many of the prophecies are called; it designs something received from the Lord, taken up and carried to others; so Balaam is said to “take up his parable”, (^{<0237>}Numbers 23:7). Here it does not design a prediction of future events, unless it can be thought that there is in the following words a prophecy of the Messiah; but

an instruction, a declaration of things useful and profitable; so preaching in the New Testament is called prophesying often, (^{<641>}1 Corinthians 14:1,3,4). This is a part of the word of God, of the prophecy which came not by the will of man, but by the inspiration of God, (^{<619>}2 Peter 1:19-21); which prophecy

the man spake, this excellent good man Agur, who was divinely inspired; (see ^{<643>}Numbers 24:3 ^{<621>}2 Samuel 23:1);

unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal; who were either the children of Agur, whom he instructed in the knowledge of divine things; or they were, as Aben Ezra, either his companions with whom he conversed about sacred things, or his disciples who inquired of him about these things, and learned them of him. Some think^{f829} these are titles of God himself, to whom Agur directs his speech, and acknowledges his ignorance of the divine Being, whom he might justly call Ithiel and Ucal, that is, “God with me”, and “the mighty One”; and certain it is that Agur does direct a prayer to God, (^{<3107>}Proverbs 30:7-9); And some read these words themselves as a prayer, “let God be with me, and one shall prevail”^{f830}, that is, over all mine enemies; for, if God is on the side of his people, who shall be against them? or, “I shall be able” to do all things through the Lord’s strength, (^{<683>}Romans 8:31 ^{<3143>}Philippians 4:13); But I rather think the words should be read, as Jarchi observes, “concerning Ithiel and Ucal”^{f831}; that is, concerning the Messiah, to whom these names agree. Ithiel, or “God with me”, is very similar to a phrase used by Christ himself in the days of his flesh, (^{<649>}John 8:29 16:32). God was with him as the eternal Word, and his only begotten Son, from all eternity, which denotes his co-existence, nearness of union, equality of nature, and distinction of persons; he was with him as Mediator before the world began, in the council of peace, which was between them both; in the covenant of grace made with him, in which all things were agreed upon respecting the salvation of his people; he was with him in the beginning of time down to his incarnation; he was with him in the creation of all things, in the sustentation of them; in the works of providence, and in the government of the church; he was with him during his state of humiliation; in his infancy, to protect him from the malice of Herod; he was with him when disputing with the doctors in the temple, to direct him; he was with him at his baptism, transfiguration, and other times; he was with him throughout his public ministry, from the beginning to the end of it; he did good and healed all manner of diseases, and wrought amazing miracles, God being with him, (^{<647>}John 3:2) (^{<443>}Acts 10:38); and

he was with him in his sufferings and at his death; and so he is with him in his exalted state; he raised him from the dead, set him at his own right hand, and ever attends to his prevalent intercession; and will be with him in raising the dead and judging the world. “Ucal”, which has the signification of being able, strong, mighty, and powerful, agrees with Christ, who is the mighty God the most mighty, the Almighty; and which appears by the works he did before his incarnation, as the creation of all things out of nothing, the preservation of all things, and the several wonderful events in which he was; concerned, as the confusion of languages, the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, the conducting the children of Israel through the wilderness, with others; also what he did when here on earth, the mighty works and miracles done by him, and especially the great work of man’s redemption, and also the raising of himself from the dead: moreover, what he now does and will do for his people show him to be the mighty One; taking the care of all the churches and providing for them; supplying all the wants of his people, bearing all their burdens, supporting them under all their temptations, and delivering them out of them; strengthening them for his service, protecting them from their enemies, keeping them from falling, raising their dead bodies, and bringing all the sons of God to glory: or if the word should be rendered, as it may, “eaten” or “consumed”^{f832}, it is true of Christ, whose zeal ate him up, (^{<4980>}Psalm 69:9); and who is the antitype of the sacrifice consumed by fire.

Ver. 2. *Surely I am more brutish than [any] man*, etc.] “Every man is [become] brutish in his knowledge”; man in his original state was a knowing creature but sinning lost his knowledge, and “became like the beasts that perish”; hence we read of the “brutish among the people”: but Agur thought himself not only brutish among the rest, but more brutish than any. So Plato^{f833} says of some souls living on earth, that they are **ψηριωδεις**, of a brutish nature; (see ^{<2404>}Jeremiah 10:14) (^{<4940>}Psalm 49:20 94:8). Or I think the words may be rendered, “a brute [am] I [rather] than a man”^{f834}; have more of the brute than of the man, especially in the sight and presence of God; a very beast before him, or in comparison of other wise, holy, and good men; or with respect to the knowledge of spiritual, divine, and heavenly things, (^{<4972>}Psalm 73:22); or “a brute [was] I from [the time]”, or “[ever since I was] a man”^{f835}; as soon as he was born, being born in sin, and like a wild ass’s colt, (^{<4811>}Job 11:12);

and have not the understanding of a man; or “of Adam”^{f836}; who was made after the image of God, which consisted in knowledge as well as

holiness; who knew much of God, his nature, perfections, and persons; of the creatures, and the works of his hands and of all things in nature; but affecting more knowledge than he should lost in a great measure what he had, and brought his posterity in and left them in a state of blindness and ignorance, one of whose sons Agur was: or his meaning is, that he had not the understanding, as not of Adam in innocence, and of prophets and other eminent men of God, so not of ordinary men of those who had, he least share of the knowledge of divine things. Aben Ezra, who takes Ithiel and Ucal to be scholars or companions of Agur, supposes, that they asked him questions concerning the divine Being, nature, and perfections, to which he answers in this strain; showing his insufficiency to give them any instruction or satisfaction in such matters, or to discourse on such sublime subjects: or rather his view was to show the blindness and ignorance of human nature with respect to divine things he was about to treat of; and particularly to observe, that the knowledge of a Saviour, and salvation by him, were not from nature, and attainable by that; and that a man must first know himself, his own folly and ignorance, before he can have any true knowledge of Ithiel and Ucal, the mighty Saviour and Redeemer; of the need of him, and of interest in him. Some think his view is to prove that his words, his prophecy, or what he was about to say, or did say, must be owing entirely to divine inspiration; since he was of himself; and without a divine revelation, so very blind, dark, and ignorant; it could not be owing to any natural sagacity of his, who was more brutish than any; nor to any acquired knowledge, or the instruction of men, since he had none, as follows; and so **yK**, with which the words begin, may be rendered “for” or “because”^{f837}, as it usually is, “for I am more brutish, than any man”, etc.

Ver. 3. *I neither learned wisdom*, etc.] Natural wisdom or philosophy, so as to understand the nature of things, and reason about them in a philosophical manner; or political wisdom, so as to know how to govern states, and manage the affairs of kingdoms; or in a lower sphere to transact the affairs of life to any peculiar advantage; he had not a polite or liberal education: or spiritual and evangelical wisdom; that is, not of himself through the mere strength and force of his genius and natural capacity, or of others; he was not the son of a prophet, nor brought up in the schools of the prophets; he did not learn it, nor was he taught it by men; for this is not acquired by human teaching; it is what comes from above, from heaven, and by the revelation of God;

nor have the knowledge of the holy; or “holies”^{f838}; either of holy persons, such knowledge as holy men of God had; or of the holy angels, not of their nature, capacities, influence and operations; nor such as they have: or rather of the holy Persons in the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit; their nature modes of subsisting, perfections, purposes, and the like; at least not a full and comprehensive one: or of holy things, of the holy Scriptures, and the holy doctrines of them; however, not what is perfect and complete. It may be rendered, “but I have the knowledge of the holy”^{f839}, though he had not the advantage of human literature, nor had ever been under the instructions of men on one account or another, and therefore what he knew, or was about to discourse of, was from God. Some understand this verse and (<BIB>Proverbs 30:2) of Ithiel, or Christ^{f840}, as in the esteem of men, (<BIB>1 Corinthians 1:23 <BIB>John 7:15).

Ver. 4. *Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended?* etc.] That has been thither to fetch knowledge of God and divine things, and has returned to communicate it. Enoch was taken up to heaven before this time: and Elijah, as is very probable, after; but neither of them returned again, to inform mortals what was to be seen, known, and enjoyed there: since, the Apostle Paul was caught up into the third heaven, and came back again; but then the things he heard were such as it was not lawful for a man to utter: and indeed, since the coming of Christ there is no need of any further revelation to be made nor of any such expedition, in order to obtain it, (<BIB>Romans 10:6-8). And, properly speaking, there never was any besides him, whose names are Ithiel and Ucal, that ever did this: he lay in the bosom of the Father, and was privy to his whole mind and will; he descended from heaven to earth not by local motion, but, by assumption of nature; and when he had made known his Father’s will, and done his work, he ascended far above all heavens, and received gifts for men; to fill his churches and ministers with them, in order to communicate and improve spiritual and divine knowledge; and therefore, with great propriety and pertinence, he applies these words to himself, (<BIB>John 3:13);

who hath gathered the wind in his fists? not any mere creature; not any man or set of men; it is not in the power of any, either men or angels, to restrain or let loose the winds at pleasure; nor has Satan, though called the prince of the power of the air, that is, of the devils in the air, any such command of them; none but he that made them can command them to blow, or be still; even he who brings them out of his treasures, and his own son, whom the wind and seas obeyed; see (<BIB>Psalm 135:7 <BIB>Matthew

8:26,27 14:32); The Heathens^{f841} themselves are so sensible of this, that the power of the winds only belongs to God, that they have framed a deity they call Aeolus; whom the supreme Being has made a kind of steward or store keeper of the winds, and given him a power to still or raise them as he pleases^{f842};

who hath bound the waters in a garment? either the waters above, which are bound in the thick clouds as in a garment which hold them from pouring out; or the waters of the sea, which are as easily managed by the Lord as an infant by its parent, and is wrapped about with a swaddling band, (^{<8308>}Job 26:8 37:8,9). But can any creature do this? none but the mighty God; and his almighty Son the Ithiel and Ucal, who clothes the heavens with blackness, and makes sackcloth their covering: even he who is the Redeemer of this people, and has the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to them (^{<2810>}Isaiah 50:2-4);

who hath established all the ends of the earth? fixed the boundaries of the several parts of the world, Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and the several countries in them? settled the foundations of the earth, and secured the banks and borders of it from the raging of the sea? None but these next mentioned; (see ^{<8304>}Job 38:4,5);

what [is] his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? if thou surest it is a mere man that does all these things tell his name; or, if he be dead, say what is the name of his son or of any of his family; so Jarchi and others interpret it: or rather, since it is the Lord alone and his own proper Son, to whom these things can be ascribed say what is his name; that is, his nature and perfections which are incomprehensible and ineffable; otherwise he is known by his name Jehovah and especially as his name is proclaimed in Christ and manifested by him and in his Gospel: and seeing he has a son of the same nature with him, and possessed of the same perfections, co-essential, and co-existent, and every way equal to him, and a distinct person from him, say what is his nature and perfections also; declare his generation and the manner of it; his divine filiation, and in what class it is; things which are out of the reach of human capacity, and not to be expressed by the tongue of men and angels; see (^{<4127>}Matthew 11:27 16:15-17). Otherwise, though his name for a while was a secret, and he was only called the seed of the woman and of Abraham, (^{<0085>}Genesis 3:15 22:18 32:29 ^{<0737>}Judges 13:17,18); yet he had many names given him under the Old Testament; as Shiloh, Immanuel, the Wonderful, Counsellor, the

mighty God, the everlasting Father, and Prince of peace; the Lord our righteousness, and the Man, the Branch: and under the New Testament, Jesus the Saviour, Christ the Anointed; the Head of the church, the Judge of the world; the Word of God, and King of kings, and Lord of lords. This Scripture is a proof of Christ's being the eternal Son of God; of his equality with his divine Father as such, their name and nature being alike ineffable; of his co-existence with his Father as such; and of his omnipresence and omnipotence, expressed by the phrases here used of ascending, etc. and of his distinct personality from the Father; the same question being distinctly put of him as of the Father. Some render the last clause, "dost thou know?"^{f843} thou dost not know God and his Son, their being and perfections are not to be known by the light of nature, only by revelation, and but imperfectly.

Ver. 5. *Every word of God [is] pure*, etc.] The whole word of God. "All Scripture", given by inspiration of God, to which Agur directs, as giving the best account of God, of his name, nature, and perfections; of his Son, person, offices, and grace; being pure, very pure, "purified"^{f844} like silver, purified in a furnace of earth. The whole of Scripture is pure, free from all falsehood and error; coming from the God of truth, who cannot lie, and therefore called "the Scriptures of truth": every promise is pure as well as precious, made without dissimulation, faithfully performed, and all yea and amen in Christ; every doctrine is pure, free from the mixtures and inventions of men; the sincere milk of the word; consistent and all of a piece, not yea and nay; and tending to promote purity of heart and life; wholesome words, and doctrines according to godliness; see (^{<9126>}Psalm 12:6 18:30 119:140);

he [is] a shield unto them that put their trust in him; not the word, but God, whose the word is; and which represents him as a proper object of trust, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual, at all times; and as a shield to protect such, by his power and grace, from all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, and also from all errors and false doctrines; (see ^{<488>}Psalm 3:3 5:12 18:35 84:9,11,12).

Ver. 6. *Add thou not unto his words*, etc.] To the words of God; as the Jews did, by joining their oral law, or the traditions of the elders, to the written word, and preferring them before it; and as the Papists, by making their unwritten traditions, and the sense and determinations of their church, equal to the Scriptures; and as all enthusiasts do, who set up their

pretended dreams, visions, revelations, and prophecies, upon a foot with the word of God, or as superior to it; whereas that is, and that only, the rule and standard of faith and practice, and is a sufficient and perfect one; (see ^(f845)Deuteronomy 4:2);

lest he reprove thee; that is, God; either by words or by blows, by threatenings and denunciations of his wrath and displeasure; or by chastisements and corrections for such daring pride, blasphemy, and wickedness; those who add to his words, he threatens to add plagues unto them, (^(f845)Revelation 22:18);

and thou be found a liar; a forger, speaker, and spreader of doctrinal lies, such doctrines as are contrary to the word of truth; not being built on that, but upon human inventions, and additions to it.

Ver. 7. *Two [things] have I required of thee*, etc.] Or, “have asked of thee ^(f845), O God”; as may be supplied, for the words are addressed to him. The following is a prayer made unto him, which contains the two requests here referred to; his requests are not many, his words are few; he did not make long prayers, or expect to be heard for much speaking;

deny me [them] not before I die; not that he thought he was near his end; nor is it his sense that he desired some time or other, at least before he died, that he might have these two requests granted him after mentioned; for what are poverty and riches, or convenient food, to a man just dying? but his meaning is, that he might be thus favoured as long as he lived; that all the while he was in the world, he might be kept from sin, and be free from anxious worldly thoughts and cares, having a moderate competency of good things: faith in prayer will have no denial; a wrestling Jacob will not let the angel go without a blessing; importunity in prayer gets much from the hands of God; “the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much”, (^(f845)James 5:16).

Ver. 8. *Remove far from me vanity and lies*, etc.] This is the “first” request, to be preserved from sin, in general; which is a vain, lying, and deceitful thing; promising pleasure, profit, liberty, and impunity, which it does not give. Agur desires to have vain thoughts removed out of his mind, vain words from his mouth, and vain actions from his life and conversation; to have his eyes turned from beholding vanity, and his feet from walking in it; and his affections taken off from the vain things of the world, the lusts, pleasures, profits, and honours of it; as well as to be kept from all errors

and false doctrines, which are lies in hypocrisy; with which men that lie in wait to deceive would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect: Agur conscious of his own weakness, and proneness to evil, desires the Lord would not lead him into temptation, but deliver him from all evil, doctrinal and practical. Some understand this of the forgiveness of sin; which is sometimes expressed by a putting or removing it away, (^{<1073>}2 Samuel 7:13) (^{<1932>}Psalm 103:12);

give me neither poverty nor riches; this is the “second” request, not to be extremely poor nor too rich; but to be in a middle state between both, neither rich nor poor; which Horace^{f846} calls the golden mean, and which Agur wisely judged to be the happiest state; most free from care, least liable to temptation, and the best situation to serve the Lord in: a like wish was made by Theognis^{f847}, I neither love to be rich,

“nor desire it; but to live on a little, having no evil;”

so Martial^{f848}. Both riches and poverty are of God; men are rich or poor, as the Lord pleases; he suffers poverty in some, and gives riches to others: Agur deprecates both, as having their separate, peculiar, snares and temptations; though no doubt this request was made with submission to the will of God; and not as considering either of them as evils in themselves, but as they might be attended with bad consequences, and what is next mentioned being more eligible;

feed me with food convenient for me; not merely what was agreeable to his palate, suitable to his constitution, and sufficient for nature; nor for him personally, but for his family also; and what was proper and suitable to the condition and circumstances in which he was, and to the rank and quality he held, whether in a more private or in a more public capacity. Some render it, “the food of my allowance”^{f849}; what is allotted and appointed for me It seems to be the same which Job calls his “necessary food”, and Christ “our daily bread”: it takes in both food and raiment, which having, men should be contented with; see (^{<1822>}Job 23:12 ^{<1061>}Matthew 6:11 ^{<1068>}1 Timothy 6:8). The allusion seems to be to the stated measure of food allowed to servants by the day, or rather by the month, called “demensum”, and which was but small and scanty^{f850}; yet with this Agur could be content.

Ver. 9. *Lest I be full, and deny [thee]*, etc.] This is the dangerous consequence of riches, and the temptation they expose men unto; who,

being full of the things of this world, are tempted to deny the Lord; not his being and perfections directly, but chiefly his providence; to deny that what they have, they have received of him, but attribute it to their own care, diligence, and industry; and now think they can live without him, without any dependence on his providence, having a large affluence of the things of life: yea, they may be said to deny him, when they forget the bounties of his providence; are not thankful to him for them; that flatter themselves with a continuance of them, without any regard to him, as if he had no concern in the affairs of life; (see ^{<f825>}Deuteronomy 32:15);

and say, Who [is] the Lord? as Pharaoh did, (^{<f826>}Exodus 5:2). I am not obliged to him; I can live without him, I have enough of my own;

or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God [in vain]; this is the snare that attends poverty; men, for want of food and raiment, are tempted to steal from their neighbours, which is a sin against the law of God, the eighth command; and then to cover the theft, when an oath is offered to purge them from the charge and suspicion of it, they take it, and so are guilty of false swearing, or taking the name of God not only in vain, but falsely, and so become guilty of the breach of the third command. Agur, a good man, is desirous he might not be exposed to temptations to such evils, and especially which so affected the honour and glory of God.

Ver. 10. *Accuse not a servant unto his master,* etc.] Wrongly, rashly, and without any foundation, nor for any trifling thing; unless it be in a case of moment and importance, when his master's business is sadly neglected, or he is injured in his property by him: especially care should be taken not to calumniate a servant, to abuse him with the tongue, as the word ^{<f851>} signifies; the circumstance he is in should be considered, as a servant; and how severe masters are apt to be towards them, and therefore little matters should be hid from them; and much less should they be aggravated, and least of all should falsehoods be told of them. So Doeg the Edomite accused David to Saul, and the Pharisees accused the disciples of Christ to their Master, (^{<f827>}1 Samuel 22:9) (^{<f828>}Matthew 15:2); the apostle's advice is good, and agrees with Agur's, (^{<f840>}Romans 14:4);

lest he curse thee, and thou be found guilty; or, "and thou shouldest sin"^{<f852>}; that is, afterwards; and so the curse come upon thee he has wished for: or the sense is, lest he should curse thee before men, and hurt thy character and reputation; or imprecate a curse from the Lord, which he may suffer to come upon thee for sin. Aben Ezra interprets this of a

servant, that flies from Heathen countries to the land of Israel, to be made a proselyte of; who should not be discovered, and returned to his old master.

Ver. 11. [*There is*] a generation [*that*] curseth their father, etc.] A sort of men that neither fear God nor regard men; and are so inhuman as to be without natural affections to their parents; have no reverence of them, love to them, nor give them any honour or obedience; so far from it, that they curse their father that begot them; imprecate on him all the evils in life they can think of, and wish him out of the world;

and doth not bless their mother; cannot give her a good word, who bore them, and brought them up in the most tender and indulgent manner; yea, so unnatural as to curse her also, for that is intended by this way of speaking; (see ~~3107~~ Proverbs 30:17).

Ver. 12. [*There is*] a generation [*that are*] pure in their own eyes, etc.] Not in the eyes of God, who sees the heart, and all the impurities of it, as well as of life and conversation; nor in the eyes of others, though such may appear outwardly righteous before men; but in their own eyes, in their own conceit and imagination, trusting in themselves that they are righteous: but such have not their eyes opened or enlightened to see the plague of their own hearts, the spirituality of the law of God, the perfection of righteousness that requires; nor the righteousness and holiness of God himself; nor the imperfection and insufficiency of their own; did they, they would not seem pure and righteous to themselves. No man is pure by nature, or through anything done by them; but by the grace of God, and through the blood and righteousness of Christ; and such are far from being pure in their own eyes, or as considered in themselves: but those who are pure neither by nature nor by grace, yet think they are so. There were some such in Agur's time, and such were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time; there were a generation of them; and there are of the same sort in our days, as Papists, Perfectionists, and all self-justiciaries; see (~~218~~) Luke 18:9);

and [yet] is not washed from their filthiness; their native, original, and universal pollution by sin they have from their birth, and which is increased by numerous actual transgressions; and from which none are or can be washed but those who are born of water and of the Spirit, or are washed with the washing of regeneration; and are washed from their sins in the blood of the Lamb, whose blood cleanses from all sin; and are arrayed with the fine linen, clean and white, the righteousness of the saints, which is the

righteousness of Christ imputed to them: whatsoever is short of these leaves men unwashed from their filthiness, whatever opinion they may have of themselves; (see ^{<389D>}Job 9:30,31) (^{<2422>}Jeremiah 2:22).

Ver. 13. [*There is*] a generation, *O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.*] Above others, on whom they look with scorn and contempt; as those do who have more riches than others, and boast of them; they despise their poor neighbours, and disdain to look upon them: and such also who have more knowledge and wisdom than others, or at least think so; they are puffed up in their fleshly minds, and say of the illiterate or less knowing, as the proud Pharisees did, “this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed”: and likewise those who fancy themselves more holy and righteous than others; these, in a scornful manner, say, “stand by thyself, I am holier than thou”; and thank God they are not as other men are, as publicans and sinners; (see ^{<2896>}Proverbs 19:4,7 ^{<387D>}John 7:49 ^{<2874>}Isaiah 65:4 ^{<2811>}Luke 18:11, 12). Hence Pliny^{f853} says, that in the eyebrows there is a part of the mind; those especially show haughtiness; that pride has a receptacle elsewhere, but here it has its seat; it is bred in the heart, but here it comes and here it hangs: wherefore Juvenal^{f854} calls pride and haughtiness, “grande supercilium”; and proud haughty persons are said to be supercilious.

Ver. 14. [*There is*] a generation whose teeth [are as] swords, etc.] As sharp as swords; like such the beasts of prey have; cruel, barbarous, and inhuman creatures; (see ^{<3574>}Psalms 57:4);

and their jaw teeth as knives; exceeding sharp and biting:

to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from [among] men: by their tyranny, oppression, and cruelty, to deprive them of the little they have; and even to take away their lives from them, and utterly destroy them; of this disposition are all tyrants and persecutors: such were Rome Pagan, compared to a red dragon in the times of the ten Heathen persecutions; and such is Rome Papal, signified by a beast, like a leopard, bear, and lion; and which has been drunk with the blood of the saints.

Ver. 15. *The horse leech hath two daughters, [crying], Give, give*, etc.] Or “the blood sucker”^{f855}; so it began to be called in the times of Pliny^{f856}, to which the last generation of men may well be compared; blood thirsty creatures, that never have enough, and are not satisfied with the flesh of men, nor with their blood; and such particularly the Papists are: and not

only this generation of men, but there are three or four things besides, which resemble the horse leech for its insatiableness; for the horse leech has not two daughters only, but more. Some, by her two daughters, understand the two forks of its tongue, which some naturalists say it has; though later ones, and more diligent inquirers into those things, find it has not; but either with its three teeth, or by the compression of its mouth on all sides, sucks the blood, and will not let go until it is filled with it^{f857}: others have proposed the two sorts of leeches as its daughters, the sea leech, and that which is found in fenny and marshy places. But it is best, by its daughters, to understand such that resemble it, and are like unto it; as those that are of like nature and quality, and do the same things as others, are called their children; (see ~~ⲁⲓⲃⲓ~~ Matthew 23:31,33 ~~ⲁⲓⲃⲓ~~ John 8:44) (~~ⲁⲓⲃⲓ~~ John 3:10); and so the number of its daughters, which are always craving and asking for more, and are never satisfied, are not only two, but more, as follows;

there are three [things]; or, “[yea], there are three [things]”

[that] are never satiated: [yea], four [things] say not, [It is] enough; not two only, but three, and even four, that are quite insatiable and are as follow. The Syriac version renders the whole thus,

“the horse leech hath three beloved daughters; three, “I say”, they are, which are not satisfied; and the fourth says not, It is enough.”

Some, as Abendana observes, interpret it of hell, by a transposition of the letters; because everyone that perverts his ways descends thither. Bochart^{f858} interprets it of fate, and so Noldius^{f859}: and Schultens renders the word, the most monstrous of evils; it signifying in the Arabic language, as he observes, anything monstrous and dreadful; such as wood demons, serpents, and dragons, which devour men and beasts. Suidas^{f860}, by the “horse leech”, understands sin, whose daughters are fornication, envy, and idolatry, which are never satisfied by evil actions, and the fourth is evil concupiscence.

Ver. 16. *The grave*, etc.] Which is the first of the four daughters, or insatiable things, which resemble the horse leech: the grave is the house appointed for all living; it stands ready for them, it is open to receive them when dead; and though such multitudes have been put into it, since death reigned in the world, yet it is not full, it waits for more; nor will its mouth be shut till the last enemy, death, is destroyed; (see ~~ⲁⲓⲃⲓ~~ Proverbs 27:20);

This is an emblem of a covetous man, who enlarges his desire as hell or the grave; and is never satisfied with gold, silver, and increase of substance he has, but is always craving more;

and the barren womb; the second daughter, that cries, Give, give, as Rachel, “give me children, or I die”, (^{<ORIG>}Genesis 30:1): barren women are oftentimes impatient for children, as she was; and importunate, as Hannah; and as the Israelitish women were before the coming of the Messiah, each hoping he might be born of them; especially before it was so clearly known that he should be born of a virgin: though it may be rather the barren womb of harlots is here meant, and who are generally barren, and whose lust is insatiable; and this may be an emblem of lust, which is never satisfied; whether it be a lust of riches, or of honour, or of uncleanness, or of sensual pleasures;

the earth [that] is not filled with water; which is dry and parched, and opens and gapes; and though large quantities of rain may fall upon it, which it greedily drinks in; yet is not seen, nor is it filled with it, but it thirsts for more: this may be an emblem of good men, that have received abundance of the grace of God; and though they thirst not after sin, as they before did, and others do; yet thirst after God, more knowledge of him, and communion with him, and for more grace, like the dry and thirsty land, and cannot have enough of it; see (^{<ORIG>}John 4:13,14 ^{<ORIG>}Psalm 63:1,2 ^{<ORIG>}Hebrews 6:7); or rather of wicked men, who drink up iniquity like water, and yet never have their fill of it to their satisfaction. This is the third thing, and the fourth follows:

and the fire [that] saith not, [It is] enough; but let what fuel will be cast into it, it devours it, and still wants more: by the Egyptians, as Herodotus^{f861} relates, fire is reckoned an animated beast, which devours all it can lay hold on; and when it is filled with food, it dies with that which is devoured by it. Such is the fire of divine wrath, hell fire, in which sinners are, as thorns and briars; and which is unquenchable, everlasting, burns for ever and ever; the Tophet, ordained of old, deep and large, the pile thereof is fire and much wood, kindled by the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, (^{<ORIG>}Isaiah 30:33). These are the four daughters of the horse leech which resemble that in its insatiableness. Jarchi makes mention of some that interpret the horse leech of “sheol”, or the state of the dead; and the two daughters, of paradise and hell; the one says, “Give me the righteous”; and the other says, “Give me the wicked.” Aben Ezra applies

these four to the four generations before spoken of; the grave, into which are cast the generation of those that curse their father, and die before their time; the barren womb, the generation of those that are not washed from the filthiness of whoredom, and have no children; the earth not filled with water, the proud and haughty, who are humbled by famine; and the fire is that which descends from heaven, to consume the generation that destroy the poor and oppress the needy, as fire came down upon them in the days of Elijah. Jarchi takes notice of a Midrash, which applies these four things to the four monarchies; as it does also all the four things after mentioned.

Ver. 17. *The eye [that] mocketh at [his] father*, etc.] At his advice, admonitions, and instructions; looks upon him with scorn and disdain, and treats him as a weak, silly, old man: here Agur returns to the first generation he had observed;

and despiseth to obey [his] mother; her orders and commands: or, “the obedience of his mother”^{f862}; her discipline and instruction, having no regard to it. The word is rendered “gathering” in (^{Q1490}Genesis 49:10); and Jarchi interprets it of the gathering of wrinkles in her face: and so the Targum, Arabic, and Syriac versions render it, “the old age of his mother”; despising her as an old foolish woman; (see ^{Q1292}Proverbs 23:22); **qhl**, in the Ethiopic language, signifies to “grow old”, from whence the word here used, by a transposition of letters, may be derived; and Mr. Castell^{f863} observes, that the royal prophet, among others, seems to have taken this word from the queen of Sheba;

the ravens of the valley, shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it; it signifies, that such persons shall come to an untimely end, and an ignominious death; either be drowned in a river, when floating upon it, or cast upon the banks of it, the ravens that frequent such places, and are most cruel and voracious, should feed upon them: or they should be hanged on a tree, or be crucified^{f864}, where birds of prey would light upon them; and particularly pick out their eyes and eat them, as being softest and sweetest to them; therefore first aim at them, and of which birds, and especially ravens, are very fond^{f865}; and is a just retaliation for their scornful and disdainful looks at their parent. This may figuratively design the black devils of hell, the posse of them in the air, who are sometimes compared to the fowls thereof; to whom such unnatural and disobedient children shall become a prey; (see ^{Q1304}Matthew 13:4,19).

Ver. 18. *There be three [things which] are too wonderful for me, etc.]*

Which were above his reach and comprehension; what he could not find out, nor account for, nor sufficiently admire;

yea, four things which I know not; the way of them; as follows.

Ver. 19. *The way of an eagle in the air, etc.]* And so of any other bird; but this is mentioned, because it flies swiftest, and soars highest: but the way in which it goes is not known, nor can it be seen with the eye; it cuts the air, and passes through it, but leaves no track behind it which may be pointed to, and it may be said, that is the way the eagle took and flew towards heaven out of sight;

the way of a serpent upon a rock; a smooth hard rock; and wonderful it is that it should creep up it without legs; and where it leaves no impression, no footsteps by which it can be traced, as it may in soft and sandy places;

the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; it is marvellous that such a vessel should be supported upon the sea; that it should weather the storms and tempests of it; that it should be steered through the trackless ocean to distant countries; and, particularly, though it makes furrows in the waters, and divides the waves; yet these quickly close again, and there is no path to be seen in which it goes; there is no beaten road made by it, nor by the vast numbers which go the same way, which a man can see with his eyes or follow;

and the way of a man with a maid; or “to a maid”,^{f866}; the many artful ways and methods he uses to get into her company, who is kept recluse; and to convey the sentiments and affections of his heart unto her, to gain her love to him, and obtain her in an honourable way of marriage; or to decoy and deceive her, and draw her into impure and unlawful embraces: it may design the private and secret way of committing fornication with her; which sense seems to be confirmed by (^{<3R11>}Proverbs 30:20). Some of the ancients, particularly Ambrose^{f867}, interpreted the whole of this verse of Christ: “the way of an eagle in the air”, of his ascension to heaven, with men his prey, taken out of the jaws of the enemy; and which is such as is beyond the comprehension of men, that one of so great majesty should vouchsafe to come down from heaven, or ascend thither: “the way of a serpent upon a rock” he understands of the temptations of Satan, the old serpent, with which he attacked Christ, the Rock; but could imprint no footsteps of his malice and wickedness on him; could find nothing in him to

work upon, nor leave any sign behind him, as upon Adam: “the way of a ship in the midst of the sea” he interprets of the church; which though distressed with storms and tempests of persecution and false doctrine, yet cannot suffer shipwreck, Christ being in it: and the last clause he renders as the Vulgate Latin version does, “and the way of a man in youth”; which he explains of the journeys which Christ took, and the ways of virtue he pursued, to do good to the bodies and souls of men, which are so many as not to be numbered. But it may be better interpreted of the wonderful incarnation of Christ, his conception and birth of a virgin; which was a new and unheard of thing, and the way and manner of it quite inscrutable, and more hard and difficult to be understood than any of the rest; for the words may be rendered, “the way of a man in a maid” or “virgin”; that is, the conception of Geber, the mighty man, in the virgin; (see ²⁸¹²Jeremiah 31:22). Gussetius^{f868} gives the mystical sense of the whole, as referring to the ascension of Christ; his coming out of the stony grave; his conversation among the people, like the tumultuous waves; and his incarnation of a virgin.

Ver. 20. *Such [is] the way of an adulterous woman*, etc.] It is equally unknown as the way of a man with a maid; it is difficult to detect her, she takes so much care and caution, and uses so many artful methods to conceal her wickedness from her husband; though she lives in adultery, it is in a most private manner, and carried on so secretly and artfully that she is not easily discovered;

she eateth, and wipeth her mouth; like one that eats what he should not, wipes his mouth that it might not be known or suspected he had ate anything; so such an adulteress commits the sin of adultery; and when she has done looks as grave and demure, and carries it so to her husband and all her friends, as if she was the chastest person upon earth. The allusion may be to harlots, who after an impure congress used to wash themselves^{f869}, and had servants to wait upon them and serve them with water, called from hence “aquarioli”^{f870};

and saith, I have done no wickedness; she says by her behaviour, by her demure looks; and if suspected and challenged with it utterly denies it. This is an emblem of the antichristian whore of Rome, who, though the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth; though guilty of the foulest adultery, that is, the grossest idolatry, yet pretends to be the pure and chaste spouse of Christ; and, under the guise of purity and holiness, and

with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, seduces the minds of many; (see ^{<670>}Revelation 17:1,5 ^{<820>}2 Thessalonians 2:10,11).

Ver. 21. *For three [things] the earth is disquieted*, etc.] The inhabitants of it are made very uneasy;

and for four [which] it cannot bear; they are a load and burden upon it, and are intolerable to those that dwell on it, and make them very uncomfortable.

Ver. 22. *For a servant, when he reigneth*, etc.] Being unfit for it through his education, not having been trained up in and learned the arts of government and maxims of it; and through the disposition of his mind, which is mean, abject, and servile; and as he has been used himself when a servant, so he will use others^{f871} and through his circumstances, being poor, he will take oppressive methods to become rich; and being raised from a low estate, he is the more imperious, proud, and haughty^{f872}; all which and more make his reign intolerable; (see ^{<2090>}Proverbs 19:10 28:3). This may be applied to antichrist, the “servus servorum”, who in a haughty, tyrannical, and insolent manner, exalts himself above all that is called God: and reigns over the kings of the earth, at least has done so, and that in such a manner as was unbearable; deposing kings at pleasure, disposing of their kingdoms, and trampling upon their necks, and making their subjects his vassals; (see ^{<820>}2 Thessalonians 2:4 ^{<672>}Revelation 17:12,13,17,18);

and a fool, when he is filled with meat; as Nabal at his feast, when he behaved so intolerably in his cups towards David and his messengers, that he determined on his destruction, had not Abigail interposed, (^{<0250>}1 Samuel 25:10,11,36); and there are many such fools, who having their bellies full of food, and their heads full of liquor, are very overbearing in company, and give their tongues such a loose as is very disturbing: or this may intend such fools, or wicked men, who are full of wealth and riches, and being purse proud, are exceeding haughty and insolent; set their mouths against the heaven, and blaspheme God that is in it; and their tongues walk through the earth, and spare none, but lash all in an insufferable manner. These disquiet families, neighbourhoods, communities, and commonwealths; (see ^{<0737>}Psalms 73:7-9).

Ver. 23. *For an odious [woman], when she is married*, etc.] Odious for her person, her ugliness, and the deformity of her body; or rather for the ill qualities of her mind, which, while single, she endeavours to conceal, but,

being married, hides them no longer; but becomes imperious, proud, scornful, and malicious, and behaves in an ill natured way to her husband and all about her, to such a degree, that there is no bearing the place where she is;

and an handmaid, that is heir to her mistress; that has got so much into her affections that she leaves all she has to her when she dies, which makes her insufferably proud and vain; or she marries her master after the death of her mistress, and so coming into her place enjoys all she had, but only her wisdom and humility; which being wanting, she behaves in such a manner as to make the whole family uneasy. This might be exemplified in the case of Hagar, the bondmaid of Sarah, a type of those that are under the law of works, and seek the inheritance by it; and who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others, (^{<0160>}Genesis 16:4-6 21:10 ^{<02>}Galatians 4:24-31).

Ver. 24. *There be four [things which are] little upon the earth*, etc.] Small in bulk, that have little bodies, are the lesser sort of animals;

but they [are] exceeding wise; show a great deal of art and wisdom in what they do; or “but they are wise, made wise”^{f873} by the instinct of nature, by the direction of Providence, by which they do things that are surprising. Some versions, that have no regard to the points, read the words, “but their are wiser than the wise”^{f874}; than even wise men; wise men may learn much from the least of creatures; (see ^{<820>}Job 12:7).

Ver. 25. *The ants [are] a people not strong*, etc.] Far from it; what is weaker than an ant? a multitude of them may be destroyed at once, with the crush of a foot. Pliny calls it “minimum animal”, the least animal; and the Arabians use it as a proverb, to call a weak man one weaker than an ant: and there is one sort of ants called “dsar”, so small that one hundred of them will not weigh more than a barley corn^{f875}: they are called a people, because they associate together in great numbers; though small in bulk, and weak as to power and strength; and which is a figure elsewhere used in the sacred Scriptures; (see ^{<2006>}Joel 1:6); and by profane writers, as Homer and Virgil, who speak of bees as a people and nation^{f876}; and of nations of flies, and of flying birds, geese, cranes, and swans^{f877};

yet their prepare their meat in the summer; build granaries with great art and wisdom, carry in grains of corn with great labour and industry, in the summer season, when only to be got, and lay them up against winter.

Phocylides^{f878} the poet says much the same things of them; he calls them a tribe or nation, small but laborious, and says, they gather and carry in their food in summer for the winter, which is a proof of their wisdom. Cicero^{f879} says, the ant has not only sense, but mind, reason, and memory. Aelianus^{f880} ascribes unspeakable wisdom to it; and Pliny^{f881} discourse and conversation; (see Gill on “^{<2166>}Proverbs 6:6-8”). It is a pattern of industry and diligence both as to temporal and spiritual things, (^{<2100>}Ecclesiastes 9:10 ^{<1169>}Matthew 6:19,20).

Ver. 26. *The coney* [are but] *a feeble folk*, etc.] Or “rabbits”; though some think these creatures are not intended, because they are not so little as those with which they are ranked, the ant, the locust, and spider; and because of the places in which they burrow and make their houses, which though in holes and caverns of the earth, yet not in rocky but sandy places; rather therefore it is thought that the mountain mouse, or bear mouse^{f882}, as Jerom calls it, is meant; of which, he says^{f883}, there were great numbers in Palestine, and which had their habitations in the holes of rocks; though if Spain has its name from $\hat{\text{p}}\text{q}$, as some say, because of the multitudes of coney in it; and hence that part of Spain called Celtiberia is called by Catullus^{f884} Cuniculosa; the coney may be thought to be meant by this word, and so it is translated in (^{<8105>}Leviticus 11:5 ^{<5407>}Deuteronomy 14:7 ^{<1418>}Psalm 104:18); the only places where it is elsewhere used; and the word may be derived either from $\hat{\text{p}}\text{s}$, to “cover”, by a change of the letters q and s ; or from Pwq , which has the signification both of breaking, and of hiding and covering, (^{<1085>}Genesis 3:15 ^{<1391>}Psalm 139:11); and this creature breaks the earth and hides itself in it^{f885};

yet make they their houses in the rocks; it is usual with other writers to call the receptacles of any creatures, beasts, birds, or insects, their houses so we read of the house of the ant, and of the tortoise and snail^{f886}; and which, because it carries its house era its back, it is called by Cicero^{f887} “domiporta”; (see ^{<1417>}Psalm 104:17,18); the coney make theirs in the rocks, to cure themselves from their more potent enemies; and thus what they want in strength is made up in sagacity, and by their wise conduct they provide for their safety and protection. These are an emblem of the people of God, who are a weak and feeble people, unable of themselves to perform spiritual duties, to exercise grace, to withstand the corruptions of their nature, resist the temptations of Satan, bear up under afflictive providences, and grapple with spiritual enemies, or defend themselves from

them: but such heavenly wisdom is given them, as to betake themselves for refuge and shelter to Christ, the Rock of Israel; the Rock of salvation, the Rock that is higher than they; a strong one, on which the church is built, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail: and here they are safe from the storms of divine wrath, and the avenging justice of God; from the rage and fury of men, and the fiery darts of Satan; here they dwell safely and delightfully, and have all manner of provision at hand for them; they are the inhabitants of that Rock, who have reason to sing indeed! (see ²³³⁶Isaiah 33:16 42:11).

Ver. 27. *The locusts have no king*, etc.] These are small creatures also, yet very devouring ones; and consume the fruits of the earth, wherever they come and light; (see ²²⁰³Exodus 10:13-15); they are very numerous, and move in large bodies, and yet with great regularity and order; which shows the wisdom there is in them by natural instinct, though they have no king to command, guide, and direct them: in this the mystical locusts differ from them, who have a king, whose name is Abaddon, (⁶⁹¹Revelation 9:11);

yet they go forth all of them by bands; the Targum is,

“they are all gathered together as one.”

They get together in one place; they associate and join themselves in bands, and keep together, though they have no ruler over them; an emblem of unity, concord, and harmony, let the form of government be what it will, as the best security to a people: and these creatures, when they move from place to place, they move in a body, in a very regular manner; “in precise order”^{f888}, as the words may be rendered, with great exactness, everyone in his proper place, all in rank and file; and though they have no general to marshal them, yet are in, and march in as good order as the most regular army does. So the Arabic version,

“yet in their army, their affairs and manner are in a beautiful disposition;”

indeed they are God’s army, as they are called, (²⁰²⁵Joel 2:25); and it is he that gives them their wisdom, instructions, directions, and commission. It is rendered by some, “everyone cutting”; that is, as Kimchi^{f889} interprets it, cutting the green grass and trees; or, “every one dividing”^{f890}; that is, to himself, the prey or spoils, as kings do; (see ²³³⁴Isaiah 33:4).

Ver. 28. *The spider taketh hold with her hands,* etc.] On the thread she spins, or on the flies and bees she catches in her web. This is a small creature, yet very wise; what a curious thread does she spin! what a fine web does she weave! with what exactness and proportion is it framed! as if she understood the rules of mathematics and architecture;

and is in kings' palaces; as well as in the houses of poor people, and in temples also; we read^{f891} of one in the temple of Ceres, which drew its web over the face of the image: and though her webs are oftentimes destroyed, especially in kings' palaces; yet such is her constancy and assiduity, and her unwearied application to business, that, as fast as they are destroyed, she attempts to restore them. This creature is an emblem of diligence in things temporal and spiritual; which those that use in the former sense shall stand before kings, and not before mean men; and in the latter sense shall have the presence of the King of kings, and dwell in his palace here and hereafter: also of worldly minded men, who labour to be rich; spend their time, and take a great deal of pains for mere trifles; weave curious webs, and, after all, only catch flies; and those they cannot hold, uncertain riches, which make themselves wings and fly away. Likewise this creature may resemble hypocrites, whose hope and trust are as the spider's web, built upon their own righteousness, spun out of their own hearts; a fine, thin, slender thread, which cannot bear one stroke of the besom of divine justice; such as these are in the palaces of Christ the King, are in his churches, hypocrites in Zion; (see ^{<8883>}Job 8:13,14). Aben Ezra interprets it of the ape: the same David de Pomis^{f892} observes, and Mr. Weemse^{f893}, who seems to incline to this sense; and this creature King Solomon, no doubt, had in his palace, since his navy brought many of these, every three years, from those parts to which it was sent, (^{<1102>}1 Kings 10:22); and to these hands more properly belong than to spiders, and are taken into king's palaces for their pleasure and diversion; but to these there is one objection, that this creature is not a little one. Others understand it of the "lizard", that sort which is called "stellio"; but it is a question whether this is to be found in king's palaces. Bellonius^{f894} makes mention of a kind of lizard, which creeps into walls and catches flies, and is called by the Greeks "samiamiton", a name very near the Hebrew word here used: and Pliny^{f895} speaks of the "stellio", or lizard, as being in doors, windows, and chambers; and as a very fraudulent and deceitful creature to men, none more so; and also as poisonous, as this creature in the text by its name seems to be: and Austin^{f896} makes mention of the lizard as a domestic

animal; which catches flies as the spider, with whom he joins it. The Targum, Jarchi, and Gersom, take it to be the spider, as we do; which may be thought most likely, since the creature here meant seems to have its name from the Arabic word “sam”, which signifies poison^{f897}; though it is affirmed^{f898} the spider is not poisonous; as is well known by persons who have frequently swallowed them, without any more harm than happens to hens, robin red breasts, and other birds, who make them their daily food; and so men have been bit by them, without any ill consequence: wherefore it is still thought by some that the lizard is more probably meant; since some sorts of them are poisonous^{f899}, though not all, for some are eatable; (see Gill on “^{<B113>}Leviticus 11:30”).

Ver. 29. *There be three [things] which go well*, etc.] In a very orderly and composed manner; with constancy and cheerfulness, with great stateliness and majesty, intrepidly, and without fear;

yea, four are comely in going; very beautiful and lovely to look at as they walk.

Ver. 30. *A lion, [which is] strongest among beasts*, etc.] For what is stronger than a lion, or more courageous and undaunted? it walks with great majesty, very slowly, step by step, the left foot first; shaking its shoulders as it goes, as the philosopher^{f900} describes its going, and as here intended, and this without fear;

and turneth not away for any; it does not go out of its way for any creature it meets with; nor does it hasten its pace when pursued, nor show the lest sign of fear; nor does it turn its back to any; which is observed and confirmed by Aristotle^{f901}, Aelianus^{f902}, Pliny^{f903}, and other naturalists; particularly what Homer^{f904} and Virgil^{f905} say of this animal agrees with this account of Solomon. This creature is an emblem of Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, who is stronger than the strong man armed; who never turned his back to any of his enemies; nor turned aside from the way of his duty, or the work of his office, on account of any; not Herod the fox, who threatened to kill him; nor Satan, the roaring lion, when he knew he was on the march to meet him; nor any of those, who, though they had a band of soldiers, that came to take him; (see ^{<B131>}Luke 13:31,32 ^{<B140>}John 14:30,31 18:4-8); and also it is an emblem of righteous men, who are as bold as a lion; and cannot be moved from their duty by anything they meet with, but remain steadfast and constant in it; (see ^{<B100>}Proverbs 28:1 ^{<B103>}Acts 20:23,24).

Ver. 31. *A greyhound*, etc.] So Gersom interprets the word; but Jarchi owns he does not know what is meant; and Aben Ezra only says, it is the name of a living creature, but does not say what; but observes, that some interpret it of the “bee”, and others of the “eagle”. The words of the original text only describe something “girt about the loins”^{f906}: and Kimchi^{f907} observes, that some say it is a hunting dog so called, because it is thin about the loins, as if it was bound and girt; and Aristotle^{f908} describes hunting dogs as well girded about their loins: but others, as Kimchi in the same place observes, interpret it of the leopard, which is small, and strong in its loins; and others of a bird called the starling; but he owns he cannot understand the meaning of its loins being girt: David de Pomis^{f909} interprets it of a cock; others, he says, interpret it a hunting dog; others, a leopard; and some, a species of an unclean bird; perhaps he means the starling, as before; and so the word is used for that bird in the Talmud^{f910}, and in the Arabic language^{f911}. Most likely the “horse” is meant; which is a very stately and majestic creature in its going, and is very comely when it has its harness girt on; and especially a war horse, with all its warlike accoutrements, when it proceeds to battle, and stalks on in it; this creature, one should think, could not be omitted among the four, which is described in so magnificent a manner in (~~39:19~~ Job 39:19-25); and is called the goodly horse in the battle, (~~30:3~~ Zechariah 10:3); unless a fine slender bodied race horse should be meant: the horse bids fairer than any other creature named to be what is designed. The third creature follows, which goes well, and is comely in going:

an he goat also; which with its long beard walks very gravely, and in a stately manner, before the flock; and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions add, “going before the flock”; (see ~~25:8~~ Jeremiah 50:8). This stately walk of the goat is very particularly taken notice of by, Aelian^{f912}; he observes, that the she goat disdains to be last in a flock of sheep, but declares by her walk that she ought to be first; he adds, that the he goat goes before the she goats, glorying in his beard; and, by a kind of wonderful instinct in nature, judges the male is to be preferred to the female^{f913}. Kings, rulers, and governors, are compared to this creature; as Alexander the great is in (~~27:8~~ Daniel 8:5,11); (see ~~30:3~~ Zechariah 10:3); especially such resemble it who rule well, and set good examples to their subjects: and to such, ministers of the Gospel are like; who go before their flocks, guide and direct them, and are examples to them: and likewise all

believers; who strive to go before others in good works, and who then are comely in their going. The fourth is,

and a king, against whom [there is] no rising up; no insurrection, no opposition; who is not to be resisted or withstood; a lawful king, in the lawful administration of government, who rules in the fear of God, and according to his word, and the good and wholesome laws of a nation, ought not to be resisted, (^{63B}Romans 13:1,2); and a powerful, successful, and victorious king cannot be resisted, withstood, and prevailed over; he drives all before him, and subdues all under him, as David, Cyrus, Alexander, and others. But to none can this better be applied than to Christ, the King of kings; against whom there is no rising, before whom none can stand, against whom the gates of hell can never prevail; who, even in his state of humiliation, conquered and subdued all his and our enemies; destroyed the tyrant, sin; spoiled Satan, and his principalities and powers; overcame the world; abolished death, the last enemy; and delivered his people out of the hands of all, and made them more than conquerors: and who went forth in the ministry of the Gospel, into the Gentile world, conquering and to conquer; bearing down all opposition before him, and subduing the people under him; and who, in the latter day, will engage with his antichristian enemies, the beast, false prophet, and kings of the earth, and shall overcome them, and clear the world of them. And this is King who is comely in his going; as he was in his goings of old from everlasting; when he drew nigh to his divine. Father, and became the surety of his people; and in his coming into this world, by the assumption of our nature, to save lost perishing sinners: and so he is in his spiritual visits to his saints; in his goings in the sanctuary, and walks he takes amidst the golden candlesticks, his churches; as he will be also when he comes a second time in the clouds of heaven: it will be a glorious appearing; he will come with all the saints, and be attended with his mighty angels; he will come in their glory, in his own, and in the glory of his Father; and will be comely in his going indeed it will be with great stateliness and majesty. The learned Dr. Pococke^{f914}, from the use of the word “alkum” in the Arabic language, renders the words thus, “and a king with whom the people is”; who agree together; the one rules well, and the other obey cheerfully; such a king walking with majesty is comely to his people, and terrible to his enemies. The Targum is,

“and a king, who stands and speaks in the house of his people.”

Ver. 32. *If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself*, etc.] Against a king, against whom there is no rising up; by speaking evil of him, or rebelling against him; which is acting a foolish part, since it brings a man into troubles and difficulties inextricable; or by self-commendation, which is the height of folly, and the fruit of pride; or carried it in such a haughty and overbearing manner to others, as to provoke to wrath and anger;

or if thou hast thought evil; purposed and designed it, and contrived the scheme of doing it, though not yet put in execution; though folly is not actually committed, yet since the thought of it is vain, care should be taken to prevent it;

[lay] thine hand upon thy mouth: think again before the thing resolved on is done; as studious and thoughtful men put their hand to their mouth, when they are deeply considering any affair before them: or put a stop to the design, let it go no further; what has been thought of in the mind, let it never come out of the mouth, nor be carried into execution; stifle it in the first motion: or if this respects a foolish action done, as it also may, since it stands connected with both clauses, then the sense is, be silent; do not pretend to deny the action, nor to excuse it; nor to say one word in the defence of it; nor to lay the blame upon others; and much less to calumniate and reproach such who faithfully reprove for it; take shame to thyself in silence, and repent of the iniquity done. Aben Ezra thinks these words are said to Ithiel and Ucal; but rather, to any and everyone, to all that should hear and read these proverbs. The Targum is,

“do not lift up thyself, lest thou be foolish; and do not stretch out thine hand to thy mouth.”

Ver. 33. *Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter*, etc.] Or the pressing of it. This is a thing well known and certain, that of milk, when pressed out of the udder, and put into a churn, and there is shook together, by a constant violent agitation or motion, called churning, butter is produced; and cheese is sometimes called pressed milk^{f915}, and is pressed with the runnet, and by the hand also^{f916};

and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: a too violent compression of it, or forcible blowing of it, in order to purge it from any impurity in it; instead of doing which it may break the tender skin, and bring forth blood, which may be of bad consequence;

so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife; irritating the passions of men, and provoking them by scurrilous and reproachful words to wrath and anger, produce contentions, feuds, and lawsuits, which are not soon and easily ended; and therefore such a conduct should be carefully avoided. The same word is used in the three clauses, and signifies pressing, squeezing, forcing.