

## THE PROVERBS

The penman of this book is expressed in the title, Solomon, who was famous for his proverbs, of which he spoke three thousand, as it is recorded, #1Ki 4:32, the most eminent and useful of them being doubtless collected in this book. And that the greatest part of this book was composed by Solomon doth sufficiently appear, because that part of it which was collected and composed by other hands is so plainly distinguished from the foregoing part, #Pr 25:1. The nine first chapters contain a preface or introduction to the book, or an exhortation to true wisdom; and all the following chapters contain the precepts of wisdom called proverbs; wherein we are not to expect that order and coherence which is in many other books of Scripture.

### Proverbs 1:1 PROVERBS CHAPTER 1

The use of the proverbs, Pro\_1:1-6. An exhortation to fear God, and believe his word, Pro\_1:7. The glory of those children that obey the instruction of their parents, Pro\_1:8,**9**. A caution against yielding to enticing sinners, Pro\_1:10. The contrivance, Pro\_1:11,**12**, arguments, and invitation of these sinners, Pro\_1:13,**14**. Reasons against complying with them, Pro\_1:15-19. Wisdom's call to repentance, Pro\_1:20-22. Her promise, Pro\_1:23. Her complaints and threatenings, Pro\_1:24-30. The fruit of sin, Pro\_1:31,**32**. Peace to the penitent, Pro\_1:33.

Proverbs are ancient, and wise, and short sayings in common use; whereof some are plain and easy, others are intricate and obscure.

**Of Solomon;** proceeding from Solomon, and most of them digested by him into this book. See the preface.

Proverbs 1:2

**To know;** written to help men to know thoroughly and practically.

**Wisdom;** both human wisdom, to conduct our affairs in this life, which divers of the following proverbs do; and especially Divine wisdom, which Solomon chiefly designed; or to make men wise to know their duty, and to save their souls.

**Instruction;** the counsels and instructions delivered, either by God or by men, in order to the attainment of wisdom.

**Words of understanding;** either,

1. Which are the effects of a good understanding; or,
2. Which teach a man true understanding, whereby to discern between truth and error, between good and evil, to choose the former, and to refuse the latter.

Proverbs 1:3

**To receive the instruction;** willingly to receive the counsels of others, which is a good step to wisdom, and a part of it.

**Of wisdom;** such as is wise, and tends to make men wise and prudent. This is opposed to *the instruction of fools* and *folly*, of which Pro\_16:22 **19:27**. For folly or wickedness hath its school, and multitudes of scholars, that are very apt to learn its lessons.

**Justice, and judgment, and equity;** which teach men just judgment or equity, to wit, their whole duty, both to God and to others, and to themselves. These three words seem to signify the same thing, and are heaped together to note either the necessity of the precept, or the exactness and diligence which is required in the practice of it.

Proverbs 1:4

**Subtilty;** or rather,

**prudence,** as this word is used, Pro\_3:21 **5:2 8:5,12**, which elsewhere is taken in an evil sense for *craft* or *subtilty*.

**The simple;** such as want wisdom, and are easily deceived by others, and therefore most need this blessing.

**The young man,** which wants both experience and self-government.

Proverbs 1:5

**Will hear;** is not self-conceited, as fools are, but willing to learn from others; and therefore will attend to the following instructions.

**Will increase learning;** and thereby will gain this great benefit, to grow in knowledge and wisdom. This he adds to show that this

book is useful and necessary, not only to the simple, but also to the most wise and knowing persons.

**Unto wise counsels;** not to deep speculations, but practical consideration; to the art of governing himself or others well and prudently.

Proverbs 1:6

**The interpretation,** i.e. the interpretation of a proverb, by a figure called *hendiaduo*, or the meaning and use of the wise sayings of God, or of men; to know this practically, and for his direction and benefit; for practice is the great design of this book. Dark sayings; such as are hard to be understood by inconsiderate and ungodly men, but to be found out by diligent and humble inquiry.

Proverbs 1:7

**The fear of the Lord;** reverence and obedience to God, or his worship and service, as this word is commonly used.

**The beginning;** either the foundation, or the top, and perfection, or chief point, without which all other knowledge is vain and useless.

**Fools;** wicked men, called *fools* through this whole book; such as do not fear God.

**Despise wisdom and instruction;** are so far from attaining true wisdom, that they despise it, and all the means of getting it; which fully proves what he now said, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Proverbs 1:8

**My son;** he speaks to his scholars with paternal authority and affection, to make them more attentive and obedient. Teachers among the Hebrews and others were commonly called

**fathers,** and their scholars their sons. The instruction of thy father; his good and wholesome counsels, but not such as are contrary to God's law, Pro\_19:27. The law of thy mother; those pious instructions which thy mother instilled into thee in thy tender years. See Pro\_31:1 2Ti\_1:5 **3:14,15**. This he adds, because children, when grown up, are very prone to slight their mother's advice, because of the infirmity of their sex, and because they

have not that dependence upon and expectation from their mothers which they have from their fathers.

Proverbs 1:9

This will make thee amiable and honourable in the sight of God and of men; whereas the forsaking of those good counsels will make thee contemptible.

Proverbs 1:10

**Sinners;** eminently so called, as Gen\_13:13 Psa\_1:1 **26:9**; such as sell themselves to work all manner of wickedness; particularly thieves, and robbers, and murderers, as appears from the next verses, as also oppressors and cheaters, by comparing this with Pro\_1:19.

Proverbs 1:11

**Come with us;** we are numerous, and strong, and sociable.

**Let us lay wait for blood;** to shed blood. He expresseth not their words, which would rather affright than inveigle a young novice; but the true nature and consequence of the action, and what lies at the bottom of their specious pretences.

**Lurk privily;** so we shall neither be prevented before, nor discovered and punished afterward.

**The innocent;** harmless travellers, who are more careless and secure, and unprovided for opposition, than such villains as themselves.

**Without cause;** though they have not provoked us, nor deserved this usage from us. This Solomon adds to discover their malignity and baseness, and so deter the young man from association with them.

Proverbs 1:12

**As the grave;** which speedily covers and consumes dead bodies. See Psa\_55:15 **124:3**. We shall do our work quickly, easily, and without fear of discovery.

**Into the pit;** into some deep pit, into which a traveller falls unawares, and is utterly lost, and never discovered.

Proverbs 1:13

As our danger is little, so our profit will be great.

Proverbs 1:14

**Cast in thy lot among us**, i.e. put in thy money into our stock. Or rather,

**thou shalt cast thy lot amongst us**, i.e. thou shalt have a share with us, and that equally and by lot, although thou art but a novice, and we veterans. This agrees best with their design, which was to allure him by the promise of advantage.

**Let us all have one purse**; or,

**we will have**, & c. One purse shall receive all our profits, and furnish us with all expenses. So we shall live with great facility and true friendship.

Proverbs 1:15

**Walk not thou in the way with them**; avoid their courses and their conversation, and company.

**Refrain thy foot from their path**; when thou hast any thought, or inclination, or temptation to follow their counsels or examples, suppress it, and restrain thyself as it were by force and violence, as the word implies.

Proverbs 1:16

**Their feet run**; they make haste, as it follows, without considering what they are doing.

**To evil**; to do evil to others, as was expressed Pro\_1:11,12, which also will bring evil upon themselves.

**To shed blood**; to shed innocent blood; which is an inhuman and dangerous practice.

Proverbs 1:17

The design of these words is to set forth the folly of these men by the similitude of a bird, which yet is very variously applied and understood by divers interpreters. But I shall not confound the reader with the rehearsal of them. This clause, in vain, upon the understanding whereof the whole depends, may be understood, either,

1. In respect of the fowler. So the sense is, The fowler who spreads his net in the sight of the bird loseth his labour, because the bird, perceiving the danger, will not be tempted to come to the

bait, but flees away from it. *But* , or *yet* , these (as the first words of the next verse may well be, and by the Chaldee translator are, rendered) are more foolish than the silly birds; and though they are not ignorant of the danger and mischief which these evil courses will bring upon themselves, which I have here represented, yet they will not take warning, but madly rush upon their own ruin. Or,

2. In respect of the bird. So the sense is, The silly bird, although it see the spreading of the net, yet is not at all instructed and cautioned by it, but through the greediness of the bait rusheth upon it, and is taken by it. And these men are not one jot wiser, but albeit they know and find that by these practices they expose themselves to the justice of the magistrate, and to the vengeance of God, the sad effects whereof they daily see in the destruction of their brethren in iniquity, yet they will boldly and madly run themselves into the same miseries. Both ways the sense comes to the same,

Proverbs 1:18

**And**, or *but* , or *yet* , or *so* ; for all these ways this particle is used; which is more fully expressed in the next verse.

**They lay wait for their own blood;** the destruction which they design to others falls upon themselves. Their blood answers to their feet, Pro\_1:16, and belongs to the same persons.

Proverbs 1:19

**So**, as is expressed both in the foregoing and following words,

**are the ways;** the actions and courses, which are so in the tendency and event of them.

**That is greedy of gain;** that seeks gain by unrighteous and wicked practices. *Which* ; either *which greediness* ; or rather, *which gain* , by comparing the last words.

**Taketh away the lives of the owners thereof;** brings sudden and violent death upon those who had made themselves masters and possessors of such gain.

Proverbs 1:20

Having expressed the counsels and invitations of folly and of wicked men, he now declareth the voice of wisdom. By the name

of wisdom or wisdoms he seems to understand the wisdom or counsel of God revealed to the sons of men by his word. Which he calls *wisdoms* here, as also Pro\_9:1, either to note the excellency of this wisdom beyond all other, as the greatest and chief of beasts is called behemoth or beasts, Job\_40:15; or because it consisteth of a multitude of wise precepts; or because it hath been delivered to mankind at sundry times, and in divers manners, and by many persons, prophets and apostles, and especially by the Son of God, who is called *the wisdom of God* , Luk\_11:49. And this wisdom is said to cry with a loud voice, to intimate both God's earnestness in inviting sinners to repentance, and their inexcusableness if they do not hear such loud cries. *Without* , or *abroad* , or *in the streets or open places* , as many others render it, and as it is in the next clause. Not in corners and privily, as seducers persuade men to error or wickedness, being afraid of the light, but openly and publicly before all the world.

Proverbs 1:21

**The chief place of concourse;** where there is probability of most success.

**The opening of the gates;** where magistrates sit in judgment, and people are assembled. So it crieth both to the wise and to the unwise, as Paul preached, Rom\_1:14.

**In the city;** not only in the gate, but in every part of the city. Or, *in the cities* , the singular number being put for the plural.

Proverbs 1:22

**Ye simple ones;** ye ignorant, and easy, and credulous persons, who are so soon cheated by the world and the devil, and do not understand your own interest.

**Love simplicity;** being unwilling to part with it, or to be made wiser. *Scorners* ; that scoff at all religion, and contemn the word and faithful ministers of God.

**Fools;** wilful and wicked fools, as Pro\_17:10 **26:4**.

Proverbs 1:23

**Turn ye** from your evil courses unto me.

**At my reproof;** upon this admonition here given to you. *I will pour out* ; if you will do so, I will freely and abundantly impart unto you.

**My spirit;** either my mind, as spirit is taken, Psa\_77:6 Pro\_29:11; or the gifts and graces of my Spirit, which he hath promised to such persons, Luk\_11:13 Joh\_4:14 **7:39**.

**I will make known my words unto you;** by my Spirit I will cause you truly and savingly to understand my word, which is hid from others, 2Co\_4:3

Proverbs 1:24

**I have called,** by my ministers, and by my judgments upon you or others, and by the motions of my Spirit and your own consciences. *Stretched out my hand* ; offering grace and mercy to you, and earnestly inviting you to accept of it. Lest through your deafness or distance from me you should not hear, I have beckoned to you with my hand, which this phrase signifies, Isa\_13:2 **65:2**.

**No man regarded;** few or none complied with it.

Proverbs 1:25

**Set at nought,** or *despised* , or *made void* ; resisted its power and authority.

**My counsel:** either,

1. My design of doing sinners good, which you have made of none effect to yourselves. Or,
2. My commands and counsels, which suits better with the next clause.

Proverbs 1:26

As you have scoffed at me and my ways,

**I also will laugh at your calamity,** i.e. destroy you without pity, and take pleasure therein. Compare Rev\_18:20.

**Your fear;** the misery which you do or should fear. The act for the object, as Isa\_8:12, and elsewhere.

Proverbs 1:27

**As desolation;** as some desolating sword or judgment, which quickly overruns a whole country.



**As a whirlwind;** which instantly spreadeth itself from place to place with great and irresistible violence, and doing much mischief.

Proverbs 1:28

**Early;** or, *in the morning* , as the word properly signifies, and is here rendered by others, as soon as their calamity comes; or rather, with great diligence and fervency, as this phrase commonly signifies.

**They shall not find me,** because they do not seek me by choice and with sincerity, but only by constraint, and that they may be freed from their miseries.

Proverbs 1:29

**Hated knowledge,** to wit, the practical knowledge of God, and of their duty to him, as it is explained in the following clause.

**Did not choose;** not heartily approve of it and love it, but only made some show of it.

Proverbs 1:30

**They would none of my counsel;** they refused to be guided by my counsels or precepts.

Proverbs 1:31

**They shall eat of the fruit of their own way;** they shall receive punishments answerable to their sins.

**With their own devices;** with the fruits or effects of their wicked devices. What was sweet in their mouths shall be bitter in their bellies, and that destruction which they have plotted against others shall fall upon themselves.

Proverbs 1:32

**Turning away,** to wit, from God, and from his counsels and reproofs; so this is opposed to *hearkening unto God* , Pro\_1:33. Or, as it is rendered in the margin, and by divers others, *the ease or rest* , the peace or tranquillity, as it seems to be explained in the next clause.

**Shall destroy them;** it commonly proves the occasion of their ruin, by making them presumptuous, and secure, and worldly, and proud, and forgetful of God and of their own eternal happiness,

whereby they provoke God's wrath, and bring upon themselves swift and certain destruction. Thus he meets with the common objection against the fear of God, taken from the present impunity and prosperity of ungodly men.

Proverbs 1:33

**Safely**; or *securely* , or *confidently* ; resting himself upon the conscience of his own integrity, and upon the promises and favour of God.

**From fear of evil**; from sinful and tormenting cares and fears. And as a wicked man's mind is oft full of anxiety in the midst of all his outward prosperity and glory, so the mind of a good man is filled with peace and joy, even when his outward man is exposed to many troubles.

## **Proverbs 2:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 2

Solomon exhorteth his son to get Wisdom, Pro\_2:1-4; telleth him the benefit he shall receive thereby, Pro\_2:5-10, and the evils which he should avoid, Pro\_2:11,**12**. The wicked man's ways are described, Pro\_2:13-20. A habitation promised the righteous, Pro\_2:21. The end of the wicked miserable, Pro\_2:22.

These words are spoken by Solomon, either,

1. In the name of wisdom, as before; or rather,
2. In his own name. *Hide my commandments with thee* ; lay them up in thy mind and heart with care, as men do their choicest treasures.

Proverbs 2:2

Give thyself to the study of it with affection and diligence.

Proverbs 2:3

**If thou criest**, to wit, unto God, the only giver of it, Pro\_2:5, Heb. *if thou callest* ; invitest it to come unto thee; earnestly desirest its conduct.

Proverbs 2:4

With the same unwearied diligence, and earnest desire, and patient expectation under all delays, disappointments, and difficulties,

which worldlings use in the purchase of riches, or in digging in mines of silver.

Proverbs 2:5

**Understand more perfectly and profitably;** for that very seeking and searching after it, Pro\_2:4, supposed some understanding.

**The fear of the Lord;** which is the beginning of this wisdom, Pro\_1:7.

Proverbs 2:6

**Giveth wisdom,** Heb. *will give* ; hath promised to give it, to wit, to those that so seek it; whereby he also teacheth them not to ascribe any wisdom which they may obtain unto their own wit and industry, but only unto God's favour and blessing. *Out of his mouth* from his word, or appointment, and good will; *as the word of God* is taken, Deu\_8:3.

Proverbs 2:7

**Sound wisdom,** Heb. *essence or substance* ; either,

1. Solid and true felicity, opposed to the vain enjoyments of this world, which are said to have no substance or being, Pro\_23:5. Or,
2. True and substantial wisdom, which is satisfactory and everlasting, opposed to worldly wisdom, which is but an empty shadow of wisdom, and perisheth with us.

**A buckler to them,** to protect and save them from that mischief and ruin which shall befall all wicked men.

Proverbs 2:8

**He keepeth the paths of judgment;** he guardeth and guideth the paths or ways, i.e. the counsels and actions, of good men, as the next clause explains this, which are called

**paths of judgment,** or *righteous paths* ; *judgment* being here put for *righteousness* , as it is in Psa\_99:4, and oft elsewhere. And *keeping of paths* may be put for keeping them in their paths, so as they shall neither swerve from them, nor stumble and fall in them. *And preserve the way of his saints* ; the same thing repeated in other words.

Proverbs 2:9

*Then* ; when thou hast done thy part, expressed Pro\_2:1-3, &c., and God in answer to thy desires hath given thee wisdom, Pro\_2:6; or when it is with thee, as it follows, Pro\_2:10. *Righteousness, and judgment, and equity* ; all the parts of thy duty to man, as well as the fear of God, Pro\_2:5, which contains all duties to God. These three words are used here, as also Pro\_1:3, to signify the same thing. *Every good path* ; the practice of all virtues and graces.

Proverbs 2:10

**When wisdom entereth into thine heart;** when thou dost truly love it, and passionately desire it, and hide its precepts in thy heart, according to Psa\_119:11.

Proverbs 2:11

From wicked courses, and the mischiefs which attend upon them; as is particularly expressed in the following verses.

Proverbs 2:12

**From the way of the evil man;** from following his counsel or example, which others for want of wisdom commonly do.

**That speaketh froward things;** with design to corrupt thy mind, and entice thee to evil principles or practices.

Proverbs 2:13

**The paths of uprightness;** the way of God's precepts.

**Of darkness,** i.e. of sin, which is oft called darkness, as Rom\_13:12, &c.; Eph\_5:11, because it comes from darkness, ignorance, and error, and loves darkness and hates light, and leads to utter darkness.

Proverbs 2:14

**Who rejoice to do evil;** seeking and embracing occasions of sin with diligence and greediness, and pleasing themselves both in the practice and remembrance of sin; whereas upright men abhor and watch against all occasions of sin beforehand, and mourn bitterly for it afterwards.

**Delight in the frowardness of the wicked;** not only in their own sins, but in the sins of other wicked men, which shows a greater malignity of mind and love to sin. See Rom\_1:32.

Proverbs 2:15

**Whose ways are crooked,** or, *who make their ways crooked* , i.e. whose course of life swerves from the right and straight way of God's law.

Proverbs 2:16

**From the strange woman;** from the adulteress or whore; called strange, partly because such persons were commonly heathens, or are supposed to be such by reason of that severe law against these practices in Israelitish women, Deu\_23:17, or are justly reputed heathens, as being degenerate Israelites, which are oft called strangers, as hath been noted in the Book of the Psalms; and partly because conversation with such persons is forbidden to men; as those Israelites which were not Levites are called strangers, Num\_1:51, in respect of the holy things which they were prohibited to touch; and forbidden fire is called *strange fire* , Num\_3:4.

**Which flattereth with her words;** which useth all arts and ways to allure men to unchaste actions; one kind being put for all the rest.

Proverbs 2:17

**The guide of her youth,** to wit, her husband, whom she took to be her guide and governor, and that in her youth: which circumstance is added to aggravate her sin and shame, because love is commonly most sincere and fervent between a husband and wife of youth, as they are for that reason emphatically called, Pro\_5:18 Isa\_54:6 Joe\_1:8 Mal\_2:14,15.

**Forgetteth,** i.e. violateth or breaketh, as that word is commonly used in a practical sense.

**The covenant of her God;** the marriage covenant; so called, partly because God is the author and institutor of that society and mutual obligation; and partly because God is called to be the witness and judge of that solemn promise and covenant, and the avenger of the transgression of it.

Proverbs 2:18

**Her house inclineth unto death,** conversation with her (which was most free and usual in her own house) is the ready and certain way to death, which it brings many ways; by wasting a man's vital

spirits, and shortening his life; by exposing him to many and dangerous diseases, which physicians have declared and proved to be the effects of inordinate lust; as also to the fury of jealous husbands or friends, and sometimes to the sword of civil justice, and undoubtedly, without repentance, to God's wrath and the second death. This is here mentioned as one great privilege and blessed fruit of wisdom, to be delivered from this evil.

**Unto the dead;** or, as the Chaldee and some others render it, *unto the giants* , to wit, those rebellious giants, Gen\_6:4; or, as others, *unto the damned* , or *unto hell* . See for this word Job\_7:9 Psa\_88:11 Pro\_9:18 **21:16**.

Proverbs 2:19

**None;** few or none; an hyperbolical expression, used Isa\_64:7.

**That go unto her;** that go to her house, or that lie with her, as this phrase is used, Gen\_16:4 **30:4** Jos\_2:13.

**Return again,** from her and from this wickedness, unto God. Adulterers and whoremongers are very rarely brought to repentance, but are generally hardened by the power and deceitfulness of that lust, and by God's just judgment, peculiarly inflicted upon such persons, Heb\_13:4. He alludes to the nature of corporal death, from which no man can without a miracle return to this life.

**Of the paths of life;** of those courses which lead to true and eternal life.

Proverbs 2:20

This depends upon Pro\_2:11, and is mentioned as another happy fruit of wisdom, the former being declared from Pro\_2:12 to this verse.

**Walk in the way of good men;** follow the counsels and examples of the godly; whereby he intimates that it is not sufficient to abstain from evil company and practices, but that we must choose the conversation of good men.

Proverbs 2:21

Shall have a peaceable and comfortable abode in the land of Canaan, which also is a type of their everlasting felicity. See Psa\_37:3,**9,18,29**.

Proverbs 2:22

No text from Poole on this verse.

### **Proverbs 3:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 3

Solomon exhorteth his son to obedience, Pro\_3:1-4. To faith, Pro\_3:5,6, and trust in God; the benefits that they shall receive thereby, Pro\_3:7,8. To honour God with our estates, Pro\_3:9. The advantage in so doing, Pro\_3:10. To patience under God's chastisements, Pro\_3:11. A reason for it, Pro\_3:12. The happiness of him that findeth wisdom, Pro\_3:13. Wisdom set out, with the benefits that attend her, Pro\_3:14-18. The effects, Pro\_3:19,20. Another exhortation to perform our duty, Pro\_3:21-27. To charitableness, Pro\_3:28. To avoid strife, Pro\_3:29,30. Against envy, Pro\_3:31. The misery of the wicked, and blessings of the just, Pro\_3:32-35.

**My law;** my doctrine or counsel; or the law of God, which might be called his law, as the gospel is called Paul's gospel, 2Th\_2:8, because delivered by him.

**Keep my commandments,** by diligent meditation and hearty affection.

Proverbs 3:2

God will add these blessings which he hath promised to the obedient, Deu\_8:18 **30:20** 1Ti\_4:8.

Proverbs 3:3

**Let not mercy and truth forsake thee:** either,

1. God's mercy and truth. So it is a promise, God's mercy and truth shall not forsake thee. Or rather,
2. That mercy and truth which is man's duty. So it is a precept; which seems most probable, both from the form of the Hebrew phrase, and from the following words of this verse, which are plainly preceptive, and from the promise annexed to the performance of this precept in the next verse.

**Mercy** and

**truth** are frequently joined together, as they are in God, as Psa\_25:10 **57:3**, &c., or in men, as Pro\_16:6 **20:28** Hos\_4:1, and

here. *Mercy* notes all that benignity, clemency, charity, and readiness to do good freely to others; truth or faithfulness respects all those duties which we owe to God or man, to which we have special obligation from the rules of justice.

**Bind them about thy neck**, like a chain, wherewith persons adorn their necks, as it is expressed, Pro\_1:9; which is fastened there, and not easily lost, which also is continually in one's view.

**Upon the table of thine heart:** either,

1. Upon those tablets which the Jews are said to have worn upon their breasts, which are always in sight. So he alludes to Deu\_6:8. Or,

2. In thy mind and heart, in which all God commands are to be received and engraven, as is oft required in this book, and every where. So the table of the heart seems to be opposed to the tables of stone in which God's law was written, as it is Jer\_31:33 2Co\_3:3.

Proverbs 3:4

**Find favour**, i.e. obtain acceptance, or be gracious and amiable to them.

**Good understanding;** whereby to know thy duty, and to discern between good and evil. The serious practice of religion is an excellent mean to get a solid understanding of it; as, on the contrary, a vicious life doth exceedingly debase and darken the mind, and keep men from the knowledge of truth, which not only Scripture, but even heathen philosophers, have oft observed. Others render it, *good success* ; which seems not to suit well with the following words.

**In the sight of God;** grace or favour with God, and that understanding which is good in God's sight, i.e. truly and really; as a truly good man is called good before God, in the Hebrew, Ecc\_7:26.

Proverbs 3:5

**Trust in the Lord;** wholly and securely rely upon God's promises and providence for help and relief in all thine affairs and dangers.



**Lean not unto thine own understanding;** think not to accomplish thy designs by the strength of thine own wit without God's blessing. Under this one kind of carnal confidence, which is most frequent and most plausible, he understands and forbids all other confidences in bodily strength, wealth, friends, &c.

Proverbs 3:6

**Ways;** designs and undertakings for the things of this life or of the next.

**Acknowledge him,** Heb. *know him* , to wit, practically; or, *own him* ; his wisdom, in following his counsels; his power and goodness, in expecting success from him; his sovereignty, in managing all thy affairs so as to please and glorify him.

**Direct thy paths;** assist and bless all thine endeavours, and keep thee from the paths of sin and destruction.

Proverbs 3:7

**Be not wise in thine own eyes;** be not puffed up with vain conceit of thine own wisdom, as if that were sufficient for the conduct of all thine affairs without direction or assistance from God, or without the advice of others.

**Fear the Lord:** this he adds, because the reverence and dread of the Divine Majesty will make a man, when he compareth himself with God, little and vile in his own eyes. Reverence God's wisdom, and thou wilt despise thine own.

Proverbs 3:8

**To thy navel,** i.e. to thy body, which is signified by the navel, which is a noble and useful part of the body, by which the infant receives nourishment in the womb, and which is the ligament or bond by which the bowels, a principal part of the body, are united together and preserved.

**Marrow** is the nourishment and strength of the bones, and a great preserver and prolonger of life, as the decay of it is a chief cause of the weakness, and dryness, and decay of the body. The sense of the verse is, This wisdom or fear of God is not only useful to the salvation of the soul, but also to the health and welfare of the body, both as it prevents those diseases and distempers which are oft procured by sinful lusts and passions, and as it giveth us an

interest in all God's promises, and putteth us under the care of his special providence.

Proverbs 3:9

**With thy substance;** or, *with thy riches* . Lay out thy estate not only to please and advance thyself or family, but also to glorify God; which is done by the payment of all those offerings and dues which God hath required; by giving according to thy abilities whatsoever is necessary for the support and advancement of God's worship and service in the world; by free and liberal contributions to those whom God hath made his deputies, and, as I may say, the receivers of his rents, to wit, faithful ministers and good Christians, and all others who need and require thy help. The performance of these duties is here called an *honouring of God* , partly because that word is sometimes used for *giving of gifts* , as 1Ti\_5:17, and elsewhere; and partly because it is, a testimony of our respects to God, of our obedience to him as our sovereign Lord, and that in hard and costly duties, of our thankfulness to him as our chief Benefactor and Donor of all that we have, and of our belief of his promises made to the faithful practisers of this duty; which if they were believed, the most covetous persons would be the most charitable.

**With the first-fruits;** or, with *the chief* , or *best* , or *first* , which answers to the first-fruits under the law.

Proverbs 3:10

This is not the way to diminish thy estate, as covetous and profane persons allege, but rather to increase it.

**Shall burst out;** shall be so filled, that they would burst out, if not carefully prevented.

Proverbs 3:11

**Despise not the chastening of the Lord;** either,

1. By making light of it, or not being duly affected with it; and so this is one extreme opposed to the other in the next clause. Or rather,

2. By accounting it an unnecessary, and useless, and troublesome thing; but rather esteem it as a privilege and favour from God, and a benefit to thyself; for such negatives do oft imply the contrary

affirmatives by a common figure called *meiosis* , as Pro\_17:21, and oft elsewhere. And this sense seems to agree better both with the following clause, which repeats the same thing with some aggravation, after the manner; and with the reason used to enforce this and the following command, Pro\_3:12, which concerns not such as are insensible, but rather such as had too deep a sense of the evil of affliction.

**Neither be weary of his correction;** neither esteem it tedious and intolerable, but endure it with patience and cheerfulness.

Proverbs 3:12

Afflictions are not infelicities, but benefits and comforts, because their are testimonies of God's love, which is infinitely more desirable than any evil can be terrible. They show God's purpose, and desire, and care to purge us from our sins, and to make us fit for his presence and kingdom. This and the former verse seem to be here inserted in the midst of his commendations of wisdom, to remove an objection against the excellency and happiness of wise or pious men, taken from those many calamities to which such persons are frequently exposed, the reason of which providence he here giveth.

Proverbs 3:13

**Happy is the man,** notwithstanding all his afflictions, that findeth wisdom; which supposeth his diligent searching for it, expressed Pro\_3:4.

**That getteth,** Heb. *that draweth out* ; which expression implies two things:

1. That man hath it not naturally in himself, but must have it from another, even from God and his word.
2. That men should labour for it, as those do that dig and draw forth metals out of the earth.

Proverbs 3:14

It is more necessary and advantageous, because it is so, not only for this short life, but also to the future and everlasting life, in which gold and silver bear no price.

Proverbs 3:15

For true worth and usefulness.

Proverbs 3:16

Wisdom is here represented as a great and generous princess distributing gifts to her subjects. She giveth them *long life* , &c., unless when she foresees that these things would prove snares and mischiefs to them, as they very frequently do to others.

Proverbs 3:17

**Are ways of pleasantness;** are exceedingly delightful, to wit, to those who know them and walk in them; whose judgment is certainly to be preferred before the contrary opinion of ungodly men, who are grossly ignorant of them, and professed enemies to them.

**Are peace;** procure a blessed tranquillity in a man's mind and conscience, prosperity in his undertakings, and eternal rest with God in glory.

Proverbs 3:18

**She is a tree of life;** she is a certain pledge and mean of everlasting life and happiness. He alludes to that *tree of life* , Gen\_2:9 **3:22**; which if eaten by man in Paradise before his fall, should have perpetually preserved him in life, and health, and rigour; and intimates that this is the only restorer of that life which we have lost by sin.

**That lay hold upon her;** that eagerly pursue after her, and when they overtake her do greedily and gladly apprehend and embrace her, as the Hebrew word signifies.

**That retaineth her;** that holdeth her fast, and is constantly resolved not to forsake her.

Proverbs 3:19

**By wisdom;** either,

1. By Christ, the co-essential and co-eternal Wisdom of God the Father. Or,

2. By that Divine perfection of wisdom, which is the fountain of that wisdom that is in man, which Solomon hath hitherto commended; and therefore the commendation of that wisdom tends to the commendation of this, which is a stream flowing from it.

**Hath founded the earth;** hath fixed it in the lowest part of the world.

**Established the heavens,** or *fitted* or *ordered* them; framed them in that exquisite order which now they have,

Proverbs 3:20

**The depths are broken up;** that great abyss or depth of waters, which was mixed with and contained in the bowels of the earth, did break forth into fountains and rivers for the use of men and beasts; which is justly remembered here as an illustrious effect of God's wisdom, by which the earth was made habitable, and the waters serviceable.

**The dew;** under which the rain is comprehended, as being of the same nature and use.

Proverbs 3:21

**Them,** to wit,

**wisdom and discretion;** of which he hath hitherto discoursed, and which are expressed in the end of this verse, and may be referred hither by a figure called trajection; and the words may be put into this order, *let not sound wisdom and discretion depart from thine eyes*, but keep them diligently. The like trajections are found in other texts of Scripture.

**From thine eyes,** i.e. from the eyes of thy mind. Constantly and seriously meditate upon them, and upon those excellent precepts and rules which proceed from them.

Proverbs 3:22

**Unto thy soul;** either,

1. To thee or thy person. They shall prolong and perpetuate thy life, and make it life indeed, to wit, pleasant and happy; whereas a miserable life is reputed a kind of death, and is oft so called. Or, to thy soul, properly so called. They shall quicken, and delight, and save thy soul.

**Grace to thy neck;** like a beautiful chain or ornament about thy neck, as above, Pro\_3:3 **1:9**.

Proverbs 3:23

**Walk in thy way;** manage all thy employments and concerns.

**Safely**, or *securely* , or *confidently* , without danger or fear; casting thy care upon God in the discharge of thy duty.

**Shall not stumble** at those stumbling-blocks and temptations at which heedless sinners commonly stumble and fall. Thou shalt thereby be kept from falling into sin, and that mischief which generally attends upon it.

Proverbs 3:24

Free from distracting cares and terrors, which oftentimes haunt sinners even in their sleep, because thy mind shall be composed and serene through the sense of God's favour and providence, and the conscience of thine own integrity.

Proverbs 3:25

**Be not afraid**, i.e. thou shalt not be afraid. For that it is a promise, seems most probable from the context; only it is for greater emphasis delivered in the form of a precept; I allow thee and require thee not to be afraid, which is both thy duty and privilege.

**Of sudden fear**; for sudden and unexpected evils are most frightful and grievous. And *fear* is here put for the evils feared, as Pro\_1:26,27, and oft elsewhere. The desolation of the wicked; either,

1. Actively, which they bring upon thee. Or, rather

2. Passively, which befalls them, when the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, as it is expressed, Isa\_26:21; and thou mayst be apt to fear lest thou shouldst be involved in the common calamity; but fear not, for God will then hide thee in his chambers, as he promised, Isa\_26:20.

Proverbs 3:26

**Thy confidence**; a sufficient and sure ground of confidence to thee.

**From being taken**, in the snares either of sin or of mischief.

Proverbs 3:27

**Withhold not good**; do not deny it, but readily and cheerfully impart it, which is implied in the contrary, as above, Pro\_3:11, and oft in this book, as we shall see. *Good* ; any thing which is

good; either spiritually, as counsel, comfort, reproof, &c.; or civilly, the good things of the present life, as *good* is taken, Psa\_4:6, called *this world 's good* , 1Jo\_3:17.

**From them to whom it is due**, Heb. *from the lords or owners of it* ; from those who have any kind of right to it; either,

1. By the law of justice and equity, prescribed both by the natural and written laws of God, and by the civil laws of men. So this place commands the payment of just debts, and the restitution of things either found or committed to our trust, or taken from others by fraud or violence. Or,

2. (which seems to be chiefly intended by comparing this with the next verse, though the former is not to be excluded,) By that great and sovereign law of love or charity, which God hath written in the hearts of men by nature, and frequently and severely enjoined in his word, whereby every man is obliged according to his ability and opportunity, to pity and relieve such as are in real want or misery; who in that case are here called the owners of our goods, not in respect of men, as if men in want might seize upon the riches of others, but in respect of God, who is the sovereign Lord and only true Proprietary of all men's estates, who giveth them when and to whom he pleaseth, and who doth not give away his right, nor make men absolute lords of them to dispose them as they will, but only allows them the use and comfort of them upon such conditions, and with such reservations and rent charges, as I may call them, as he hath appointed, whereof this is one, that men should readily and freely communicate them to other men who need and require their help. And such actions, though they be acts of charity and bounty to men, yet, as to God, they are acts of righteousness, as they are called, Pro\_11:18 2Co\_9:9, and in many other places.

**To do it;** either,

1. To withhold it. Or,

2. To do good. And this clause may be added, either,

1. As a limitation, to intimate that God expects from men according to what they have, and not according to what they have not, as is said, 2Co\_8:12. Or,

2. As an argument to persuade them to partake the present season to perform this duty, when they are capable of so doing, because by the changes of this world, and the course of Divine providence, they may be disenabled from the performance of this great and necessary duty, and then they will be without excuse.

Proverbs 3:28

The former verse forbade the denial, and this forbids the delay of this duty.

**Unto thy neighbour;** unto any man, as the word neighbor is commonly used in Scripture, as hath been oft proved.

**I will give,** to wit, what is thy due, in manner before expressed, or what thou needest; for this word is generally used concerning free or charitable gifts, and not concerning due debts.

Proverbs 3:29

**Devise not evil;** any thing injurious or hurtful. Having commanded doing of good, Pro\_3:27,28, he here forbids doing or designing any evil.

**Dwelleth securely by thee;** relying upon thine integrity: do not therefore betray thy trust, which is hateful even to heathens.

Proverbs 3:30

**Strive not;** either by words before the magistrate; or otherwise by thine actions.

**Without cause;** without just and necessary cause.

**If he have done thee no harm;** whereby he clearly implies that in case of injury a man may by all lawful means defend himself.

Proverbs 3:31

**Envy thou not the oppressor,** for his impunity and success in his wicked designs, and the wealth which he gains by his unrighteous practices.

**Choose none of his ways;** for what men envy in others they seek to obtain for themselves.

Proverbs 3:32

**The froward;** or, *perverse*, who walketh in crooked or sinful paths, as the oppressor last mentioned; opposed to the upright



man, who is called *right* or *straight* , as Deu\_32:4 Pro\_29:27. *Is abomination to the Lord* ; God hates him, and therefore sooner or later he must needs be extremely and eternally miserable.

**His secret is with the righteous;** they are God's friends and favourites, to whom he familiarly imparts, as men use to do to their friends, his mind and counsels, or his secret favours and comforts, to which other men are strangers. Compare Psa\_25:14 Joh\_15:15 Rev\_2:17.

Proverbs 3:33

**In the house of the wicked;** not only upon his own person, but also upon his posterity, and upon all his domestical concerns.

Proverbs 3:34

**He scorneth,** he will expose to scorn and contempt, the scorners; proud and insolent sinners, who *make a mock at sin* , Pro\_14:9, and at God and religion also, and despise all counsels and means of amendment. Compare Psa\_1:1 Pro\_1:22.

**He giveth grace,** to wit, favour, both with himself and with men, as this word and phrase is used, Exo\_3:21 **11:3 12:36** Ecc\_9:11 Luk\_2:52

Proverbs 3:35

**Shall inherit glory;** shall enjoy it not only for a season, as wicked men oftentimes do, but as an inheritance, constantly, and to perpetuity.

**Shame shall be the promotion of fools;** instead of that glory which they greedily seek, they shall meet with nothing but ignominy. Or, as it is in the margin, *shame exalteth or lifteth up fools* , i.e. it makes them manifest and notorious, as this very word is used Pro\_14:29. Or, as the words lie in the Hebrew text *fools* take or carry away (as this word is here rendered by divers both ancient and modern translators, and as it is used Lev\_6:10,**15**, and oft elsewhere) *shame* , to wit, as his proper portion or inheritance; which is here very fitly opposed to the portion or inheritance of the just. And although the verb be singular, yet it agrees well enough with the noun plural, because this is taken distributively, such constructions being very usual in the Hebrew text.

## **Proverbs 4:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 4

Solomon showeth the excellency of his doctrine, Pro\_4:1-4. His counsel to get wisdom, Pro\_4:5,6, and understanding, Pro\_4:7. The honour which cometh thereby, Pro\_4:8,9. The good effects of it, Pro\_4:10-12. He dehorts from the paths of the wicked, by the evil consequences thereof, Pro\_4:13-19; and exhorteth to keep several precepts for the better government of himself, Pro\_4:20; concerning his eyes, Pro\_4:21,22, his heart, Pro\_4:23, his mouth, Pro\_4:24, and his feet, Pro\_4:25-27.

**Of a father;** of me your teacher, who have paternal authority over you, and affection to you.

Proverbs 4:2

**Good doctrine;** not vain, or foolish, or false, or pernicious counsels, but such as are true and profitable.

**My law;** God's law or commands, delivered to you by my mouth.  
**See Poole** "Pro\_3:1".

Proverbs 4:3

**My father's son,** in a special manner; his best beloved son, and designed to be his successor in the throne.

**Tender;** young and tender in years, and capable of any impressions, and tenderly educated.

**Only beloved,** Heb. *only* , or *the only son* ; or rather, because Bathsheba seems to have had other sons, 1Ch\_3:5, *as an only son* , as dearly beloved as an only son; in which sense this title is given to Isaac, Gen\_22:2,12,16, though he had another son, and to others. And all these circumstances are mentioned to show the necessity and great benefit of wholesome instruction, which his royal parents would not neglect, no, not in his tender years, and thereby to prepare and excite them by his example to receive instruction.

Proverbs 4:4

**Said unto me:** the following verses, at least as far as the 10th verse, are propounded as the words of David, that the name of so great a king and holy a prophet might add the more authority and efficacy to his counsels.

**And live**, i.e. thou shalt live. It is a promise in the form of a command, as Pro\_3:25.

Proverbs 4:5

From the belief and practice of my word.

Proverbs 4:6

**Love her**; he intimates that it is not enough to do what is good, which may sometimes proceed from worldly or sinful motives, but that we must have a sincere and fervent more and more unto the perfect day; just men do daily love to it.

Proverbs 4:7

**The principal thing**; the most excellent of all possessions.

**With all**; even with the price of all, though it cost thee the loss of all which thou hast. Or, *or among all* . Whilst you labour for other things, do not neglect this.

Proverbs 4:8

**Exalt her**; let her have thine highest esteem and affection.

**To honour**, both with God and men; which Solomon knew by experience.

Proverbs 4:9

**An ornament of grace**, i.e. an acceptable or beautiful ornament, such as they used to put upon their heads.

Proverbs 4:10

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 4:11

**In the way of wisdom**; either

1. Which procureth wisdom. Or,
2. Which wisdom directeth thee to walk in.

Proverbs 4:12

**Thy steps shall not be straitened**; thou shalt manage thine affairs with great facility, and safety, and success. It is a metaphor from those who walk in a strait and uneven path, where they are apt to stumble and fall.

**Not stumble**; not miscarry.

Proverbs 4:13

The conductor, and preserver, and comfort of thy life.

Proverbs 4:14

**Enter not into the path of the wicked;** avoid their courses and company.

**Go not;** do not proceed further. If thou hast unadvisedly entered into it, do not persist in it, but get thee speedily out of it.

Proverbs 4:15

**Avoid it, pass not by it;** keep at a great distance from it. Compare Job\_22:23 Pro\_5:8.

**Turn from it;** shun all occasions of sin.

Proverbs 4:16

**They sleep not;** they cannot compose themselves to sleep with quietness and satisfaction to their own minds. To fall into their own snares, either into sin or into mischief.

Proverbs 4:17

**They eat the bread of wickedness:** the sense is either,

1. Wickedness is as necessary and as pleasant to them as their bread; which suits well with the former verse. Or,
2. They live wholly upon what they get by wicked courses; which gives the reason of what he last said, why they could not sleep without prey.

**The wine of violence,** i.e. gotten by violence. See on the former clause.

Proverbs 4:18

**The path of the just is as the shining light;** the common course of their lives or actions is pure and spotless, clear and certain, safe and comfortable, as light is.

**That shineth more and more unto the perfect day;** just men do daily more and more grow in knowledge, and grace, and consolation, until all be perfected and swallowed up in glory.

Proverbs 4:19

**As darkness;** full of gross ignorance and error, of uncertainty and confusion, of wickedness, of danger and misery; all which come

under the name of *darkness* in Scripture use, and suit well with the context.

**Stumble**, Heb. *shall stumble* . Though they are always in danger, yet they are always secure, and do not discern their danger, nor the cause, or manner, or time of their ruin, till they be surprised with it.

Proverbs 4:20

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 4:21

Heartily love them, and stedfastly retain them,

Proverbs 4:22

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 4:23

**Thy heart;** thy mind and thoughts, and especially the will and affections, which are the more immediate and effectual cause of all men's actions.

**Out of it are the issues of life;** from thence proceed all the actions, as of the natural, so of the spiritual life, which lead to eternal life and happiness; as, on the contrary, all evil actions tending to death spring from thence, which is here implied.

Proverbs 4:24

All sorts of sinful words, which proceed from and discover an evil heart.

Proverbs 4:25

Direct all thine actions by a good intention, to a right end, and keep thy mind fixed upon that way which leads to it, and neither look nor turn aside to the right hand nor to the left, as it follows, Pro\_4:27.

Proverbs 4:26

**Ponder the path of thy feet;** consider thine actions before thou doest them, and see that they agree with the rule.

**Let all thy ways be established;** let thine actions be uniformly and constantly good in spite of all temptations to the contrary. Or, *let thy ways be directed or disposed aright* , as this Hebrew word signifies. Or, *thy ways shall be established* . So this is a promise to

confirm the foregoing precept. If thou dost ponder them, thou mayst expect God's blessing and good success in them.

Proverbs 4:27

Fly all extremes, and neither add to God's commands, nor take from them.

## **Proverbs 5:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 5

An exhortation to the study of wisdom, Pro\_5:1,2. To shun the company of strange women, Pro\_5:3-5. The mischief of whoredom and riots, Pro\_5:14. In a married estate exhorted to chastity in that state, and to rejoice with the wife of his youth, Pro\_5:15-19. God's pondering our ways an argument to close with the exhortation, Pro\_5:20,21. The miserable end of the wicked, Pro\_5:22,23.

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 5:2

**Regard**, or, *keep*, i.e. hold fast, as it is in the next clause. *Discretion*; spiritual wisdom for the conduct of thy life, as this word is used Pro\_1:4, and elsewhere in this book.

**That thy lips may keep knowledge;** that by wise and pious discourses thou mayst preserve and improve thy wisdom for thine own and others' good.

Proverbs 5:3

It concerns thee to get and to use discretion, that thou mayst be able to resist and repel those manifold temptations to which thou art exposed.

**Drop as an honeycomb;** her words and discourses are sweet, and charming, and prevalent.

Proverbs 5:4

Her design, and the effect of that lewdness to which she enticeth men, is the sinner's destruction.

Proverbs 5:5

**Her feet;** her course or manner of life.

Proverbs 5:6

**Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life,** to prevent thy serious consideration of the way and manner of rescuing thyself from this deadly course of life.

**Movable;** various and changeable. She transforms herself into several shapes, to accommodate herself to the humours of her lovers, and hath a thousand arts and deceits to ensnare them, and hold them fast.

**Thou canst not know them;** thou canst not discover all her subtle practices, and much less deliver thyself from them.

Proverbs 5:7

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 5:8

Lest thine eyes affect thine heart, and her allurements prevail over thee.

Proverbs 5:9

**Thine honour;** thy dignity and reputation, the strength and rigour of thy body and mind, which is an honour to a man, and which are commonly wasted by adulterous practices.

**Unto others;** unto whores, and their husbands, and children, and friends.

**Thy years;** the flower of thine age, thy youthful years.

**Unto the cruel;** to the harlot, who though she pretends ardent love and kindness to thee, yet in truth is one of the most cruel creatures in the world, wasting thy estate and, body without the least pity, and then casting thee off with scorn. and contempt; and when her interest requires it, taking away thy very life, of which there are innumerable examples, and damning thy soul for ever.

Proverbs 5:10

**Strangers;** not only the strange women themselves, but bawds, panders, and other adulterers, who are in league with them.

**Thy labours;** wealth gotten by thy labours.

Proverbs 5:11

**Thou mourn at the last;** bitterly bewail thy own madness and misery when it is too late.

**Thy flesh and thy body;** thy flesh, even thy body; the particle and being put expositively.

**Consumed** by those manifold diseases which filthy and inordinate lusts bring upon the body, of which physicians give a very large and sad catalogue, and the bodies of many adulterers give full proof.

Proverbs 5:12

**How have I hated instruction!** oh what a mad beast have I been, to hate and slight the fair warnings which were given me, and against mine own knowledge, to run headlong into this pit of destruction! which are not the words of a true penitent mourning for and turning from his sin, but only of a man who is grieved for the sad effects of his delightful lusts, and tormented with the horror of his own guilty conscience.

**My heart despised reproof;** I did with my whole heart abhor all admonitions.

Proverbs 5:13

**Of my teachers;** of my parents, and friends, and ministers, who faithfully and seasonably informed me of those mischiefs and miseries which now I feel.

Proverbs 5:14

**I was almost in all evil.** Oh what a miserable man am I! There is scarce any misery, in respect of estate, or body, or soul, into which I am not already plunged. The words also are and may well be rendered thus, *In a moment I am come into all evil* . In how little a time, and for what short and momentary pleasures, am I now come into extreme and remediless misery!

**In the midst of the congregation and assembly:** I, who designed and expected to enjoy my lusts with secrecy and impunity, am now made a public example and shameful spectacle to all men, and that in the congregation of Israel, where I was taught better things, and where such actions are most infamous and hateful.



Proverbs 5:15

This metaphor contained here, and Pro\_5:16-18, is to be understood either,

1. Of the free and lawful use of a man's estate, both for his own comfort, and for the good of others. Or rather,

2. Of the honest use of matrimony, as the proper remedy against these filthy practices. This best suits with the whole context, both foregoing and following; and thus it is explained in the end of Pro\_5:18. So the sense is, Content thyself with those delights which God alloweth thee, with the sober use of the marriage bed. Why shouldst thou ramble hither and thither, trespassing against God and men, to steal their waters, which thou mightest freely take out of thine own cistern or well. The ground of the metaphor is this, that waters were scarce and precious in those countries, and therefore men used to make cisterns and wells for their own private use. And the same metaphor of

**waters**, and of *a pit* , or *well* , is applied to things of this nature elsewhere, as Pro\_23:27 Isa\_48:1 **51:1**.

Proverbs 5:16

**Thy fountains;** thy children proceeding from thy wife, called *thy fountain* , Pro\_5:18, and from thyself, as the Israelites are said to come from the fountain of Israel, Deu\_33:28 Psa\_68:26. Compare Isa\_51:1. And fountains are here put for rivers flowing from them, as it is explained in the next clause, and as it is Psa\_104:10, by a metonymy of the cause for the effect. And this title may be the more fitly given to children, because as they are rivers in respect of their parents, so when they grow up, they also become fountains to their children.

**Be dispersed abroad;** they shall be multiplied, and in due time appear abroad in the world to thy comfort and honour, and for the good of others; whereas whores are commonly barren, and men are ashamed to own the children of whoredom.

Proverbs 5:17

Hereby thou mayst be secured, that thou dost not father and leave thine estate to other men's children; whereas the parents of harlots' children are common or uncertain.

Proverbs 5:18

**Thy fountain;** thy wife, as the next clause explains it.

**Be blessed;** she shall be blessed with children; for barrenness was esteemed a curse and reproach, especially among the Israelites. Or rather, she shall be a blessing and a comfort to thee, as it follows, and not a curse and a snare, as a harlot will be.

**Rejoice with the wife;** seek not to harlots for that delight which God alloweth thee to take with thy wife. So here he explains the foregoing metaphor, and applies it to his present design.

**Of thy youth;** which thou didst marry in her and thine own youthful days, with whom therefore in all reason and justice thou art still to satisfy thyself, even when she is old. Or he mentions *youth*, because that is the season in which men are most prone to unclean practices, against which men are commonly fortified by the infirmities of old age.

Proverbs 5:19

**As the loving hind,** or, *as the beloved hind*, Heb. *the hind of loves*; as amiable and delightful as the hinds are, either,

1. To their males, the harts; or,
2. To princes and great men, who used to make them tame and familiar, and to take great delight in them, as hath been noted by many writers; of which see my Latin Synopsis.

**Her breasts,** i.e. her loves and embraces, expressed by lying between the breasts, Son\_1:13; Compare Eze\_23:3,**8,21**.

**At all times;** at all convenient times; for that there may be excess in the use of the marriage bed is manifest, not only from many scriptures, but from the light of nature, and the consent of wise and sober heathens, who have laid restraints upon men in this particular. A man may be drunk with his own wine, and intemperate with his own wife. Or, in all ages and conditions. Do not only love her when she is young and beautiful, but also when she is old and deformed.

**Be thou ravished;** love her fervently. It is an hyperbolical expression.

Proverbs 5:20

Why wilt thou destroy and damn thyself for those delights which thou mayst enjoy without sin or danger?

Proverbs 5:21

**Before the eyes of the Lord;** God sees all thy filthy actions, though done with all possible cunning and secrecy. He taketh an exact account of all their doings, that he may recompense them according to the kinds, degrees, numbers, and aggravations of all their unchaste actions.

Proverbs 5:22

In vain doth he think to disentangle himself from his lusts by repenting when he grows in years, and to escape punishments; for he is in perfect bondage to his lusts, and is neither able nor willing to set himself at liberty; and if he do escape the rage of a jealous husband, and the sentence of the magistrate, yet he shall be infallibly overtaken by the righteous judgment of God.

Proverbs 5:23

**Without instruction;** because he neglected instruction. Or, *without correction or amendment* . He shall die in his sins, and not repent of them, as he designed and hoped to do before his death.

**In the greatness of his folly;** through his stupendous folly, whereby he cheated himself with hopes of repentance or impunity, and exposed himself to endless torments for the momentary pleasures of sinful lusts.

**Go astray** from God, and from the way of life, and from eternal salvation.

## **Proverbs 6:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 6

A dehortation against suretiship, Pro\_6:1. The danger of it, Pro\_6:2; and the way of delivery, Pro\_6:3-5. Sluggards reprov'd by a similitude of the ant, Pro\_6:6-11. The carriage of the wicked described, Pro\_6:12-14; and his sudden ruin, Pro\_6:15. Of seven things which are displeasing to God, Pro\_6:16-19. The benefits of keeping the commandments, Pro\_6:20-24. The mischief of adultery, Pro\_6:25. Its evil consequences, Pro\_6:26-35.

**Surety**, to wit, rashly, without considering for whom or how far thou dost oblige thyself, or how thou shalt discharge the debt, if occasion require it. Otherwise suretiship in some cases may be not only lawful, but an act of justice, and prudence, and charity. See Gen\_42:37 **43:9** Phm\_1:19. Or, *to* (as this prefix most commonly signifies) *a friend*. *Stricken thy hand* ; obliged thyself by giving thy hand, or joining thy hands with another man's, as the custom then was in such cases; of which see Job\_17:3 Pro\_17:18 **22:26**. *With a stranger* ; with the creditor, whom he calls a stranger, because the usurers in Israel, who lent money to others for their necessary occasions, upon condition of paying use for it, were either heathens, or were reputed as bad as heathens, because this practice was forbidden by God's law, Deu\_23:9. Or, *to* or *for a stranger* ; for here is the same prefix which is rendered for in the former clause. And so he may imply, that whether a man be surety to or for a friend, or to or for a stranger, the case and course to be used is much of the same kind.

Proverbs 6:2

Thy freedom is lost, and thou art now in bondage to another.

Proverbs 6:3

**Into the hand;** into the power.

**Of thy friend;** either,

1. Of the creditor, who possibly may be also thy friend; yet take the following course with him, and much more if he be a stranger.  
Or,

2. Of the debtor, for whom, as being thy friend, thou didst become surety; whereby thou art not only in the creditor's power to exact payment, but also in the debtor's power, by his neglect or unfaithfulness, to expose thee to the payment of the debt. And this may seem best to agree both with Pro\_6:1, where *friend* is taken in that sense, and is distinguished from the creditor, who is called *a stranger* , and with the words here following; for this *humbling of himself* was not likely to have much power with a stranger and a griping usurer; but it might probably prevail with his friend, either to take effectual care to pay the debt, or at least to discharge him from the obligation, or to secure him against it some other way.

**Humble thyself**, Heb. *offer thyself to be trodden upon* , or *throw thyself down at his feet* . As thou hast made thyself his servant, bear the fruits of thine own folly, and humbly and earnestly implore his patience and clemency.

**And make sure thy friend**; or, *and prevail with thy friend* ; strive to win him by thine incessant and earnest solicitations. Or, *honour* or *magnify thy friend* , which is fitly and properly opposed to, and indeed is in some good measure done by, the humbling a man's self before him.

Proverbs 6:4

To wit, until thou hast taken care for the discharge of this obligation. Be not secure, nor negligent, nor dilatory in this matter.

Proverbs 6:5

With all possible expedition, as the roe runs swiftly away.

Proverbs 6:6

This is another distinct precept; and it is for the most part as needless to seek, as hard to find, coherence in the proverbs and counsels of this book.

**Her ways**; her actions and manner of living, especially her diligence and providence, which are the things commended in her, Pro\_6:7,8; of which naturalists give many instances, as that the ants watch the fittest seasons for all things, that they provide most plentifully against the time of famine, that they never hinder, but always assist, one another in their work, and unite their force together to carry away such things as are too large or heavy for one of them; that they prepare fit cells or repositories for their corn in the ground, and such as the rain cannot easily reach; and if through excessive rain their corn be wet, they bring it forth to be dried; that they bite off the ends of the grains of corn that they may not grow, &c.

Proverbs 6:7

Which might direct them in or quicken them to the work, as the bees have their kings, and many other creatures have their leaders. This heightens their commendation.

Proverbs 6:8

When they come forth in great numbers, as in winter they stir not out of their holes.

Proverbs 6:9

**How long wilt thou sleep?** when the ants are watchful and labour, not only in the day time, but even by night, when the moon shineth.

Proverbs 6:10

This he speaks in the person of the sluggard, refusing to arise, and requiring more sleep, that so he might express the disposition and common practice of such persons.

**Folding of the hands** is the gesture of men composing themselves to sleep.

Proverbs 6:11

**As one that travaileth**, swiftly and unexpectedly. As an armed man, irresistibly or unavoidably.

Proverbs 6:12

He showeth the haughtiness of his heart by the wickedness of his talk and discourses, to which he doth accustom himself, as walking implies.

Proverbs 6:13

He vents his wickedness, as by his speech, so also by his gestures, whereby he secretly signifies what he is afraid or ashamed to express openly to his accomplices, his intentions or desires of some evil towards another person; which having in the general declared by the motion of his eyes or feet, he points out the particular person by his fingers.

Proverbs 6:14

**Frowardness**; perverse or wicked thoughts and desires.

**He soweth discord**; either out of malice against others, or out of a base design of improving it to his own advantage.

Proverbs 6:15

Heb. *and there* shall be *no healing* ; no prevention of it beforehand, nor recovery afterward.

Proverbs 6:16

**Hate**, to wit, above many other sins, which have a worse name in the world.

Proverbs 6:17

**A proud look**; pride of heart, which commonly discovers itself by a man's looks and gestures. See Psa\_101:5 **131:1** Pro\_30:13.

**A lying tongue**; he that accustometh himself to lying and deceit in his common conversation.

Proverbs 6:18

**An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations**; he whose practice it is to design and contrive wickedness.

**Feet that be swift in running to mischief**; such as greedily and readily execute their wicked designs, without any restraint or delay.

Proverbs 6:19

**That speaketh lies**, to wit, in judgment; whereby this differs from the former lying, Pro\_6:17. *Brethren* ; dear relations or friends.

Proverbs 6:20

**Keep thy father's commandment**, so far as it is not contrary to God's command.

**Forsake not the law of thy mother**, whom children are too apt to despise. See Pro\_1:8.

Proverbs 6:21

**Bind them continually upon thine heart**; constantly remember and duly consider them.

**Tie them about thy neck**: see on Pro\_1:9 **3:3**.

Proverbs 6:22

**It**, the law of God, which thy parents have taught thee, and pressed upon thee,

**shall lead thee**; direct thee how to order all thy steps and actions.

**It shall talk with thee**; it shall give thee counsel and comfort.

Proverbs 6:23

**Is a lamp**; it enlightens thy dark mind, and clearly discovers to thee the plain and right way.

**Reproofs of instruction;** wise and instructive reproofs or admonitions.

**The way to life;** both to preserve and prolong this life, and to procure eternal life to those that obey them.

Proverbs 6:24

This is mentioned as a great commendation of God's word, because neither worldly discretion, nor civil education, nor moral precepts, nor any other considerations, are sufficient preservatives against this lust, as is manifest from daily experience.

Proverbs 6:25

**Lust not after her beauty in thine heart;** do not give way to, nor delight thyself with, unchaste thoughts or affections. Compare Mat\_5:28.

**With her eyelids;** either with her beauty, which consists much in the eyes; or rather, with her amours and wanton glances.

Proverbs 6:26

**To a piece of bread;** to extreme poverty, so as to want and be forced to beg his bread. *Hunt for the precious life* ; to take away a man's life; either by consuming his body and spirits, and so shortening his days; or more directly and strictly, when she hath any great provocation to it, or any prospect of considerable advantage by it. Or, *for the precious soul* , which she corrupteth and destroyeth. But I prefer the former sense.

Proverbs 6:27

The question implies a denial; he cannot escape burning. No more can he who burns in lust avoid destruction.

Proverbs 6:28

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 6:29

**That goeth in to his neighbour's wife;** that lieth with her, as the phrase signifies, Gen\_19:31 **29:21,23**, &c. *Toucheth her* , i.e. hath carnal knowledge of her, as this word is used, Gen\_20:6 1Co\_7:1, and in Terence, and other writers.

**Shall not be innocent;** shall be punished as a malefactor, either by God or man.



Proverbs 6:30

**Despise**, i.e. abhor or reproach him, but rather pity and pardon him, who is urged by mere necessity to these practices.

Proverbs 6:31

**He shall restore seven-fold.**

**Quest.** How doth this agree with God's law, which required only that he should restore double, or at most fourfold, or fivefold? Exo\_22:1:4.

**Answ.** 1. The number of *seven* may be here put indefinitely for many times, as it is Gen\_4:24 Lev\_26:28, and in many other places.

2. Some think that as thefts were multiplied, so the punishment of it was increased, in Solomon's time; or, at least, that it was the practice of some nations to require this sevenfold restitution.

3. He speaks not of that restitution which the law required, but of that which either the wronged person being potent might force the thief to make, or which the thief would willingly give rather than be exposed to public shame; as appears by the following clause, wherein he adds to this sevenfold restitution

**all his substance**, which no law of God or man required. See Poole "Exo\_22:4".

Proverbs 6:32

**Lacketh understanding**; is a brutish and silly man, who madly rusheth upon these filthy courses, without any sense or consideration of the horrid shame and certain destruction which attends upon them.

**Destroyeth his own soul**, or *life* ; is guilty of self-murder and of soul-murder.

Proverbs 6:33

**A wound**; civil or corporal punishment from the magistrate, or rather from the woman's husband, as it follows.

**His reproach shall not be wiped away**; although it be forgiven by God, yet the reproach and scandal of it remains.

Proverbs 6:34

**Is the rage of a man;** it inflames a man with rage and fury against the adulterer.

**In the day of vengeance;** when he hath an opportunity to avenge himself upon the delinquent.

Proverbs 6:35

He will accept of no other recompence for the injury beneath thy life.

### **Proverbs 7:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 7

Solomon again persuadeth to keep his laws, and delight in wisdom, Pro\_7:1-5. A young man void of understanding is insnared by a harlot, Pro\_7:6-9. A description of a harlot, Pro\_7:10,**11**, from her practice, Pro\_7:12,**13**. Of her subtlety, Pro\_7:14-20; by which she gained compliance to her desire, Pro\_7:21,**22**. The danger of it, set forth under the similitude of a bird, Pro\_7:23. He craveth their attention, Pro\_7:24; and dehortheth from uncleanness, Pro\_7:25-27.

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 7:2

**And live,** i.e. thou shalt live. A promise in the form of a command, as Pro\_3:25.

**As the apple of thine eye;** with all possible care and diligence, as men guard that part from all dangers, yea, even from the least mote. The eye is a most noble and necessary, and therefore highly esteemed and beloved, part of the body, and the apple thereof is the most honourable, and beautiful, and useful part of that part, and it is a most tender part, easily hurt, or destroyed, and therefore needs to be diligently watched.

Proverbs 7:3

**Bind them upon thy fingers;** as a ring which is put upon them, and is continually in a man's eye. Constantly remember them, and meditate upon them.

**Write them upon the table of thine heart;** fix them in thy mind and affection. See Poole "Pro\_3:3".

Proverbs 7:4

When other foolish young men seek wanton mistresses, whom they frequently call

**sisters** or

**kinswomen**, let wisdom be thy mistress; acquaint and delight thyself with her, and let her have the command of thy heart, and the conduct of thy life.

Proverbs 7:5

This privilege Solomon doth so oft inculcate, either because he found in himself the great power and besotting nature of lustful inclinations: or because he observed these vices to abound more in his time, in which peace and prosperity made way for luxury and uncleanness.

Proverbs 7:6

This is either an historical relation, or rather a parabolical representation of that which frequently happened.

Proverbs 7:7

Whose strength and heat made him most subject to lustful impressions, and who wanted judgment and experience as well as grace to keep him from such courses.

Proverbs 7:8

**Passing through the street;** idle and careless.

**Near her corner;** near the corner of the street in which her house stood; such places being most convenient for that wicked purpose, as giving opportunity either for the discovery of passengers in several streets, or for the escape of such as might be in danger of being taken in her house. Compare Pro\_7:12.

**He went the way to her house;** not with intention to act gross filthiness with her, as may be gathered from the following passages, but to gratify his curiosity, and to understand the manner of such persons, and to please himself with the sight of her, or discourse of her.

Proverbs 7:9

**In the evening;** when the day labour being ended, he was at leisure for any thing; and when such strumpets used to walk abroad for prey.

**In the black and dark night;** when it begun to be black and dark.

Proverbs 7:10

**With the attire of an harlot;** with a habit and carriage agreeable to her quality and design.

**Subtle,** or *wary* , or *reserved* , as she showed in her following discourse; wherein she proposeth all things which might invite him, and conceals whatsoever might discourage him.

Proverbs 7:11

**Loud,** or *clamorous* , or full of talk, which served her design.

**Stubborn;** rebellious against God, and against her husband, and incorrigible by all admonitions of ministers or friends.

**Her feet abide not in her house;** she minds not her business, which lies at home, but gives up herself wholly to idleness and pleasure, which she seeks abroad with other men.

Proverbs 7:12

**Without;** standing or waiting without or nigh the door of her house.

**In the streets;** in places of resort.

**At every corner;** at the corners of the streets, where she might either conceal or discover herself, as she saw fit.

Proverbs 7:13

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 7:14

I have paid my peace-offerings which I had vowed; whereby she signifies, either,

1. That she was no common harlot, but one of good repute for religion. Or rather,

2. That she had plentiful and excellent provisions at her house for his entertainment. For the peace-offerings were to be of the best flesh, Lev\_22:21, and a considerable part of these offerings fell to

the offerers' share, wherewith they used to feast themselves and their friends; see Lev\_2:3, &c.; Lev\_7:31, &c.; Lev\_19:6, &c.; Lev\_22:30, &c.; whereas the burnt-offerings were wholly consumed, and the flesh of the sin-offerings and trespass-offerings belonged to the priest.

Proverbs 7:15

**Diligently to seek thy face;** as not being able to take any pleasure in my feast without thy company.

**I have found thee,** by a happy providence of God complying with my desires.

Proverbs 7:16

She designs to inflame his lust by the mention of the bed, and by its ornaments and perfumes.

Proverbs 7:17

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 7:18

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 7:19

**The goodman;** whom she doth not call her husband, lest the mention of that name should awaken his conscience or discretion.

Proverbs 7:20

**He hath taken a bag of money with him;** which is an evidence that he designs to go far, and to stay a considerable time.

**And will come home at the day appointed;** so that we need not fear any surprisal.

Proverbs 7:21

**With her much fair speech;** which implies that her alluring words were more effectual with him than her impudent kisses, which possibly had a little alienated his mind from her.

**She caused him to yield;** whereby he signifies that no provocation to sin is a sufficient excuse for sin.

**She forced him;** she prevailed over him; which argues that there was some reluctancy in his judgment or conscience against it.

Proverbs 7:22

**Straightway;** without delay and consideration.

**As an ox to the slaughter;** either being drawn and driven to it; or going to it securely, as if it were going to a good pasture.

**As a fool to the correction of the stocks;** or, which is more agreeable to the order of the words in the Hebrew text, *as one in fetters*, or bound with fetters, *to the correction of a fool*, i.e. to receive such correction or punishment as belongs to fools; which may imply either,

1. That he hath no more sense of the shame and mischief which he is bringing upon himself than a fool. Or,
2. That he can no more resist the temptation, nor avoid the danger, than a man fast tied with chains or fetters can free himself, although his be a moral and voluntary, and not a natural impotency.

Proverbs 7:23

**His liver,** i.e. his vital parts, whereof the liver is one. Till his life be lost, as it is explained in the next clause.

**Knoweth not;** which may be referred either to a foolish and inconsiderate young man; or to the silly bird to which he is compared, which comes to the same thing.

Proverbs 7:24

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 7:25

**Decline to her ways;** either to the paths which lead to her house, or to her manner of living.

Proverbs 7:26

**Strong men;** men that excel others, either,

1. In bodily strength, upon which they presume, which yet is wasted, and by degrees ruined, by these courses. Or,
2. In wisdom, and fortitude, and resolution; whereby he implies how much more necessary it is for a weak and foolish young man to use all possible care and diligence to avoid this mischief.

Proverbs 7:27

**To hell;** or; *to the grave* ; for the word is used in both senses; and this sense seems better to agree both with the foregoing and following words. Although, without repentance, hell will certainly be their portion, and their first death will be followed by the second.

## **Proverbs 8:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 8

Wisdom's fame, call, and exhortation, Pro\_8:1-9. Her excellency, nature, and hatred of evil, Pro\_8:10-13. Her power, Pro\_8:14-16; and love to the godly, Pro\_8:17. Her riches, Pro\_8:18,**19**. Her eternity, Pro\_8:20-30. Her delight in the children of men, Pro\_8:31. An exhortation to true wisdom, Pro\_8:32,**33**; and the blessedness of them that are truly wise, Pro\_8:34,**35**. The fruits of sin, Pro\_8:36.

It is a great question what this wisdom is, of which Solomon discourseth so largely and profoundly in this chapter. Some understand it of that attribute or perfection of the Divine nature which is called wisdom, whereby God perfectly knoweth all things, and maketh known to men what he judgeth necessary or expedient for them to know. Others understand it of the second person in the Godhead, the Son of God, who is called *the Wisdom of God* , Luk\_11:49. And it cannot fairly be denied that some passages do best agree to the former, and others to the latter opinion. Possibly both may be joined together, and the chapter may be understood of Christ, considered partly in his personal capacity, and partly in regard of his office, which was to impart the mind and will of God to mankind, which he did,

1. By revealing it to and writing it upon the mind of man at his first creation; for it was Christ who then gave being, and life, and light to mankind, as is undeniably evident from Joh\_1:1-4, &c.

2. By publishing it unto the holy patriarchs and prophets in the time of the Old Testament; for it was Christ who spake and discovered things to them from time to time, as is manifest from 1Pe\_1:11 **3:18-20**, and from many other scriptures, both of the Old Testament, as I have formerly noted in their proper places, and in the New Testament, as we shall see hereafter.

3. By declaring it from his own mouth, and by his apostles and ministers under the gospel.

**Put forth her voice;** clearly and audibly instruct men how to avoid those fleshly lusts. He opposeth the inviting words of wisdom to the seducing speeches of the harlot.

Proverbs 8:2

**In the top of high places,** where she may be best seen and heard; not in corners and in the dark, as the harlot did. In the places of the paths; where many paths meet, where there is a great concourse, and where travellers may need direction.

Proverbs 8:3

**At the gates;** the places of judgment, and of the confluence of people. At the entry of the city, to invite passengers at their first coming, and to conduct them to her house.

**At the coming in at the doors,** to wit, of her house, as the harlot stood at her door to invite lovers:

Proverbs 8:4

To all men without exception, even to the meanest, who are thus called, Psa\_49:2.

Proverbs 8:5

**Ye simple;** who want knowledge and experience, and are easily deceived.

**Ye fools;** wilful and obstinate sinners.

Proverbs 8:6

**Of excellent things,** Heb. *of princely things* , worthy of princes to learn and practise them; or such as excel common things as much as princes do ordinary persons.

Proverbs 8:7

**Shall speak,** Heb. *shall meditate* , i.e. shall speak not rashly and hastily, but what I have well considered and digested.

**Is an abomination to my lips:** I hate to speak it; therefore you may be assured that I shall not deceive you.



Proverbs 8:8

**All the words of my mouth;** all my precepts, promises, threatenings, &c.

**Nothing froward or perverse in them;** not the least mixture of vanity, or error, or folly in them, as there is in the words of the wisest philosophers, &c.

Proverbs 8:9

**Plain;** evident and clear to their minds; or, right, just and good.

**To him that understandeth;** either to him who with an honest mind applies himself to the study of them in the diligent use of all the means appointed by God to that end; or to him whose mind God hath enlightened by his Spirit, though they seem otherwise to ignorant and carnal-minded men.

**That find knowledge;** that are truly wise and discerning persons, and taught of God.

Proverbs 8:10

**And not silver,** i.e. rather than silver, as such negative expressions are understood, Gen\_45:8 Exo\_16:8 Jer\_7:22 **16:14,15**, and in many other places. Though withal he seems to intimate the inconsistency of these two studies and designs, and the great hinderance which the love of riches gives to the study of wisdom.

Proverbs 8:11

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 8:12

**Dwell with prudence;** I do not content myself with high speculations, but my inseparable companion is prudence, to govern all my own actions, and to direct the actions of others, by good counsels. This he saith, because some persons have much wit and knowledge, and nothing of discretion.

**Find out knowledge,** i.e. I know them as clearly and certainly as if I had found them out by diligent searching. Or, *I find out*, is put for I help men to find out, as the Spirit is said to intercede, Rom\_8:26, when it helpeth us to do so.

**Of witty inventions;** of all ingenious designs and contrivances for the service and glory of God, and for the good of ourselves and others. But why may it not be rendered, *of wicked devices* , as this very word is translated, Pro\_12:2 **14:17 24:8**? For surely this is one great work of prudence, to discover, and so avoid, all evil counsels or devices, and the effects of them. But this I propose with submission, because I have not the concurrence of any interpreter in this exposition.

Proverbs 8:13

**The fear of the Lord;** which he had before noted to be the beginning of wisdom, Pro\_1:7.

**Is to hate evil;** it consists in a careful abstinence from all sin, and that not from carnal or prudential motives, but from a true dislike and hatred of it.

**Pride;** which he mentions first, as that which is most hateful to God, and most opposite to true wisdom and to the fear of God, which constantly produce humility.

**The evil way;** all wicked actions, especially sinful custom: and courses.

**The froward mouth;** false doctrines, and bad counsels and deceits.

Proverbs 8:14

**Sound wisdom:** all solid, and substantial, and useful, yea essential wisdom, is natural and essential to me, for the word properly signifies *essence* .

**I am understanding,** or, my nature and essence, as was now said. Or, I am the author of understanding; as Joh\_17:3. *This is life eternal* , i.e. this is the cause or means of it. *I have strength* courage and resolution to execute all my counsels, and to conquer all difficulties.

Proverbs 8:15

**By me kings reign:** either,

1. They get their kingdom by mine appointment and providence. Or rather,

2. They rule their kingdoms wisely, and justly, and happily, by my counsel and assistance; for this best suits with the next clause.

**And princes decree justice:** their injustice or wickedness is from themselves, but all the just and good thing: which they do they owe to my conduct.

Proverbs 8:16

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 8:17

**I love them that love me;** I do not despise their love though it be but a small and inconsiderable thing to me but I kindly accept it, and will recompense it with my love and favour.

**That seek me early,** i.e. with sincere affection, and great diligence, and above all other persons or things in the world; which he mentions as the effect and evidence of their love; for otherwise all men pretend to love God.

Proverbs 8:18

Which he mentions here, either,

1. As the best and surest way to get and to keep riches; for estates unjustly gotten quickly vanish, as is manifest both from Scripture and from common observation. Or,

2. To signify that this wisdom gives both worldly and spiritual or heavenly blessings together to its followers, whereas God gives riches alone to ungodly men, and they are to expect no other portion.

Proverbs 8:19

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 8:20

Keeping at an equal distance from both extremes, and from the very borders of them; which is called a

**putting away iniquity far from us,** Job\_22:23.

Proverbs 8:21

**Substance;** substantial, and true, and satisfying happiness; which is here opposed to all worldly enjoyments which are said not to be, Pro\_23:5; which are but mere shadows and dreams of felicity.

Proverbs 8:22

**Possessed me**, as his Son by eternal generation, who was from eternity with him, as is said, Joh\_14:10; and *in him* , as he also was in me, Joh\_14:10.

**In the beginning**; yea, and before the beginning, as it is largely expressed in the following verses.

**Of his way**; either,

1. Of his counsels or decrees. Or rather,
2. Of his works of creation, as it follows.

Proverbs 8:23

**Set up**, Heb. *anointed* ; ordained or constituted to be the person by whom the Father resolved to do all his works, first to create, and then to uphold, and govern, and judge, and afterwards to redeem and save the world; all which works are particularly ascribed to the Son of God, as is manifest from Joh\_1:1, &c.; Col\_1:16,17 **Heb 1:3**, and many other places, as we may see hereafter in their several places.

**From the beginning**; before which there was nothing but a vast eternity.

**Or ever the earth was**; which he mentions, because this, together with the heaven, was the first of God's visible works.

Proverbs 8:24

**No depths**; no abyss or deep waters, either mixed with the earth, as they were at first, or separated from it.

**Brought forth**; begotten of my Father's essence.

Proverbs 8:25

**Settled**; or, *fixed* by their roots in the earth.

Proverbs 8:26

**The earth**, i.e. the dry land, called *earth* after it was separated from the waters, Gen\_1:10.

**The fields**; the plain and open parts of the earth, distinguished from the mountains and hills, and the valleys enclosed between them.

**The highest part;** or, *the first part* , or *beginning* ; or, *the best part* , Heb. *the head* ; that which exceeds other parts in riches or fruitfulness; which he seems to distinguish from the common fields.

**Of the dust of the world;** of this lower part of the world, which consisteth of dust.

Proverbs 8:27

**I was there,** not as an idle spectator, but as a co-worker with my Father.

**Of the depth,** i.e. of that great and deep abyss of water and earth mixed together, which is called both *earth* and *water* , and the deep, Gen\_1:2. When he made this lower world round, or in the form of a globe, agreeable to the form of the upper world.

Proverbs 8:28

**Established,** Heb. *strengthened* , by his word and decree, which alone upholds the clouds in the air, which of themselves are thin and weak bodies, and would quickly be dissolved or dispersed. When he strengthened the fountains; when he shut up the several fountains in the cavities of the earth, and kept them there as it were by a song hand for the use of mankind.

**Of the deep;** which have their original from the deep, either from the sea, or from the abyss of waters in the bowels of the earth.

Proverbs 8:29

**His decree;** or, *his bound or limits* , to wit, those parts of the earth which border upon it.

**Not pass his commandment,** i.e. not overflow the earth.

**Appointed,** or *laid, the foundations o the earth* ; either,

1. The centre of the earth; or,
2. The earth itself, which is the foundation of the world; or rather,
3. The firm standing of the earth upon its foundations, notwithstanding all the assaults which the waters of the sea or within the earth make against it; which is a singular work of God's providence.

Proverbs 8:30

**By him;** conversant with him, and united to him, as was said before.

**As one brought up with him;** as one tenderly and dearly beloved by him.

**Rejoicing always before him;** he and I had constant, and intimate, and sweet converse together.

Proverbs 8:31

**Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth;** in contemplating the wonderful wisdom and goodness of God in the making and ordering of all his creatures, and of man especially.

**My delights were with the sons of men,** to uphold them by my power and providence, to reveal myself and my Father's mind and will to them from age to age, to assume their nature, and to redeem and save them, which I would not do for the fallen angels.

Proverbs 8:32

**Now therefore;** seeing I have such a true love to you, and seeing I am so thoroughly acquainted with my Father's mind, and so excellently qualified to be your Counsellor and Ruler.

Proverbs 8:33

Or, *do not make it void* or unprofitable to you by your own sloth or wilfulness.

Proverbs 8:34

As servants, and clients, and others wait at the doors of princes or persons of eminency for place, or power, or wisdom, that they may be admitted to speak or converse with them.

Proverbs 8:35

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 8:36

**He that sinneth against me,** by the neglect or contempt of or rebellion against my commands,

**wrongeth his own soul;** is guilty of self-murder and of soul-murder.

**They that hate me**, i.e. who reject and disobey my counsels, and live wickedly, which in God's account is a hating of him, as is here implied and elsewhere, as Exo\_20:5 Deu\_7:10 **32:41**.

**Love death**; not directly or intentionally, but by consequence, because they love those practices which they know will bring certain destruction upon them.

## **Proverbs 9:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 9

Wisdom's call to her people unto blessed communion and fellowship with herself, set out under a similitude of making a feast, Pro\_9:1. Her preparation, Pro\_9:2, and invitation, Pro\_9:3-5. She dehortheth from evil company, Pro\_9:6. Her counsel concerning reproof and instruction, Pro\_9:7-9. A description of the fear of God, Pro\_9:10, with the benefits thereof, Pro\_9:11,**12**. The nature of a foolish woman, Pro\_9:13-15. Her invitation, Pro\_9:16, and arguments to insnare the simple, Pro\_9:17. The miserable state of them that are deceived by her, Pro\_9:18.

**Hath builded her house**, for the reception and entertainment of her guests, as appears from the following passages. This house is opposed to the harlot's house, mentioned Pro\_7:8; and it is to be understood, either,

1. Of the heavenly house, or the palace of glory; or rather,
2. Of the church, which Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, hath erected and established in the world, in which this following feast is made, which is called God's *house* , 1Ti\_3:15 Heb\_3:3,**4**.

**Seven**, i.e. many pillars; whereby is intimated both the beauty and the stability of the church. *Pillars* ; prophets, and apostles, and ministers of holy things, which in Scripture are called pillars, as Gal\_2:9, and elsewhere.

Proverbs 9:2

**Hath killed her beasts**, i.e. made provision for the guests; which is meant of the ordinances, gifts, graces, comforts, and eternal felicities which God doth offer and give to men in and by the church.

**Hath mingled her wine**; either,

1. With spices, to make it strong and delightful, this mixed wine being mentioned as the best, Pro\_23:29,**30**. Or,

2. With water, as they used to do in those hot countries, partly for refreshment, and partly for wholesomeness; whereby also may be intimated that wisdom teacheth us temperance in the use of our comforts. Hath also furnished her table with all necessaries, and now waits for the guests.

Proverbs 9:3

**Her maidens;** her servants, to invite the guests; ministers of the word, whom he calls maidens, partly for the decency of the parable; for wisdom being compared to a great princess, was fit to be attended upon by maidens; and partly to show that God by his word did work sweetly, though strongly, and did allure and draw rather than drive sinners to repentance.

**Upon the highest places:** either upon the tops of the houses, which were flat; or rather, from such high seats as those from which judges delivered their sentences, and officers made proclamations, for the conveniency of the people's better hearing.

Proverbs 9:4

**Simple;** ignorant, and weak, and subject to delusion, and willing to learn; to show that wisdom rejects those scholars who are proud and self-conceited.

**Understanding,** Heb. *heart* , which signifies understanding, Jer\_5:21 Hos\_7:11.

Proverbs 9:5

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 9:6

**The foolish,** i.e. the wicked, and their courses and society: you must either forsake them or me, for we are irreconcilable enemies.

**In the way of understanding;** which leads to it, and is prescribed by it.

Proverbs 9:7

**He that reproveth a scorner:** the connexion may be conceived thus, Having invited the simple, he forbids the invitation of scorners; or thus, He showeth who he meant by the *foolish* ,



Pro\_9:6, even scorers and wicked men, as they are here called; and he presseth his last advice of forsaking them, because there was no good, but hurt, to be got by conversation with them.

**Getteth to himself shame;** partly from the scorer, who will revile and deride him; and partly from others, because he is frustrated in his design and hope, and by his imprudence hath brought an inconvenience upon himself.

**A blot;** a censure or reproach.

Proverbs 9:8

**Reprove not a scorer;** an obstinate and incorrigible sinner, who scornfully rejects and despiseth the means of amendment. Thus physicians deny physic to persons in desperate condition.

**Lest he hate thee;** whereby thou wilt not only expose thyself without necessity to his malice and rage, but also make thyself utterly incapable of doing him that good which possibly thou mightest do by other more prudent and proper means.

**Rebuke a wise man;** who is opposed to the scorer, to intimate that scorers, howsoever they are thought by themselves or others to be witty or wise, yet in God's account, and in truth, are fools.

**He will love thee;** both for that faithfulness and charity which he perceiveth in thee, and for that benefit which he receiveth from thee.

Proverbs 9:9

**Give instruction:** in the Hebrew it is only *give* ; for as receiving is put for learning, Pro\_1:3, so *giving* is put for *teaching* , both in Scripture and in other authors; of which see my Latin Synopsis.

**A just man;** called *a wise man* in the former branch, to intimate that good men are the only wise men.

Proverbs 9:10

**Of the holy;** either,

1. Of holy men, whether such as all saints learn, or rather such as the holy men of God, the servants of this wisdom, teach from God's word; or rather,

2. Of holy things, the Hebrew word being here taken in the neuter gender, as it is Num\_5:17, and elsewhere; for this seems best to answer to

**the fear of the Lord** in the other branch.

**Is understanding;** is the only true, and necessary, and useful knowledge.

Proverbs 9:11

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 9:12

**Thou shalt be wise for thyself;** thou dost not profit me, but thyself by it; I advise thee for thine own good.

**Thou alone shalt bear it;** the blame and mischief of it falls wholly upon thee, not upon me, or my word, or ministers who have warned thee.

Proverbs 9:13

**A foolish woman;** by which he understands, either,

1. Folly, which is opposite to that wisdom of which he hath been so long discoursing; and so it may include all wickedness, either in principle, as idolatry, heresy, &c., or in practice. Or,

2. The harlot; which, with submission, seems most probable to me, partly because all the following description exactly agrees to her, especially what is said Pro\_9:17, as also Pro\_9:18, which in effect was said of the harlot before, Pro\_2:18 **5:5**; and partly because such transitions from discoursing of wisdom, to a discourse of harlots, are frequent in Solomon, as we have seen, Pro\_2:16 **5:3 7:5**.

**Is clamorous;** speaks loudly, that she may be heard; and vehemently, that persons might be moved by her persuasions.

**Knoweth nothing;** to wit, aright, nothing that is good, nothing for her good, though she be subtle in little artifices for her own wicked ends.

Proverbs 9:14

Which notes her idleness and impudence, and diligence in watching for occasions of sin.

Proverbs 9:15

Who were going innocently and directly about their business without any unchaste design; for others needed none of those invitations or offers, but went to her of their own accord. And besides, such lewd persons take a greater pleasure in corrupting the innocent.

Proverbs 9:16

**Simple;** which title is not given to them by her, for such a reproach would not have allured them, but driven them away; but by Solomon, who represents the matter of her invitation in his own words, that he might discover the truth of the business, and thereby dissuade and deter those whom she invited.

Proverbs 9:17

**Stolen waters;** by which he understandeth, either,

1. Idolatry, or other wickednesses, which in Solomon's time before his fall were publicly forbidden and punished, but privately practised; or rather,

2. Adultery.

**Are sweet;** partly, from the difficulty of obtaining them; partly, from the art which men use in contriving such secret sins; and partly, because the very prohibition renders it more grateful to corrupt nature.

Proverbs 9:18

**Knoweth not,** i.e. he doth not consider it seriously, whereby he proveth his folly.

## **Proverbs 10:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 10

From this chapter to the five and twentieth, are sundry observations of moral virtues, and their contrary vices, with excellent rules for the government of our conversation.

**The proverbs of Solomon,** properly so called; for the foregoing chapters, though they had this title in the beginning of them, yet in truth were only a preface or preparation to them, containing a general exhortation to the study and exercise of wisdom, to stir up the minds of men to the greater attention and regard to all its precepts, whereof some here follow; of which in general these

things are fit to be observed, to help us in the understanding of them:

1. That these sentences are generally distinct and independent, having no coherence one with another, as many other parts of Scripture have.
2. That such sentences being very short, as their nature requires, more is understood in them than is expressed, and the causes are commonly to be gathered from the effects, and the effects from the causes, and one opposite from another, as we shall see.
3. That they are delivered by way of comparison and opposition, which for the most part is between virtue and vice, but sometimes is between two virtues, or two vices.

**A wise son,** i.e. prudent, and especially virtuous and godly, as this word is commonly meant in this book, and in many other scriptures.

**A glad father;** and a glad mother too; for both parents are to be understood in both branches, as is evident from the nature of the thing, which affects both of them, and from parallel places, as Pro\_17:25 **30:17**, although one only be expressed in each branch, for the greater elegancy.

**The heaviness of his mother;** the occasion of her great sorrow, which is decently ascribed to the mothers rather than to the fathers, because their passions are most vehement, and make deepest impression in them.

Proverbs 10:2

**Treasures of wickedness:** either,

1. All worldly treasures and riches, which are called the mammon of unrighteousness, Luk\_16:9, of which see the reasons there; to which righteousness or holiness, which are spiritual and heavenly riches, may be fitly opposed. Or,
2. Such treasures as are got by any sort of unjust or wicked practices.

**Profit nothing;** they do the possessor no good, but, which is implied from the opposite member, much hurt; they do not only not deliver him from death, but oft expose him to it; either from

men, who take away his life that they may enjoy his wealth; or from God, who shortens his days, and makes his death more terrible, as being attended with guilt, and with the second death.

**Righteousness:** either,

1. True holiness of heart and life. Or,
2. Justice and equity in the getting of riches, or an estate honestly obtained, which may be fitly opposed to treasures of wickedness. Or,
3. A liberal and charitable use of riches, which is oft called righteousness, as Psa\_112:9 Dan\_4:27 2Co\_9:10, &c., and is indeed but an act of justice, of which see on Pro\_3:27, which also is conveniently opposed to an unjust getting of riches; and so this contains a great paradox, yet a certain truth, that the charitable laying out of money is more profitable to men than an unjust and covetous laying it up.

**From death;** oftentimes from temporal death, because men generally love, and honour, and will assist such persons in cases of danger, and God gives them the blessing of a long life; and always from eternal death, when such charity proceeds from a sincere and honest mind, and a good conscience.

Proverbs 10:3

**Will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish;** will preserve them from famine, according to his promises, Psa\_34:10, and elsewhere, which, as other temporal promises, is not to be understood simply and universally, but with this limitation, except this be necessary for God's glory, which in all reason should overrule the creatures' good, and for their own greater benefit. For, to say nothing of eternal felicities which follow every good man's death, it is certainly in some times and eases a less evil for men to be killed with famine, than to survive to see and feel those miseries which are coming upon them, and upon the land where they live.

**The substance,** as this word is used, Psa\_52:7, or *the wickedness*, i.e. the wealth gotten by wickedness; as righteousness, Pro\_10:2, is by divers understood of an estate got with righteousness.

**Of the wicked;** who by that means shall be exposed to want and famine.

Proverbs 10:4

**With a slack hand;** negligently and slothfully, as appears from the diligence opposed to it in the next branch, and from the use of this word in this sense, Pro\_12:24,27 **19:15** Jer\_48:10. Heb. *with a deceitful hand* ; so called, partly because it seems and pretends to do something, when in truth it doth nothing; and partly because such persons usually endeavour to maintain themselves by deceit and wickedness, which they cannot or will not do by honest labour and diligence.

**Maketh rich;** not by itself, nor necessarily, as is manifest from experience, and is noted, Ecc\_9:11, but through God's blessing, which commonly is given to such, by comparing this verse with Pro\_10:22, here following.

Proverbs 10:5

**He that gathereth** the fruits of his field in summer; in harvest, as it follows, which is a part of summer. He that watcheth for and improveth the proper seasons and opportunities of doing good to himself, and to others.

**That causeth shame;** both to himself for his folly, and that poverty and misery caused by it; and to his parents, to whose negligent or evil education such things are oft, and sometimes justly, imputed.

Proverbs 10:6

**Blessings are upon the head of the just;** all sorts of blessings are wished to them by men, and conferred upon them by God. He saith, *upon their head* , either to show that these blessings come from above; and that openly, in the sight of the world, so that he can confidently speak of them to God's praise, and to his own comfort and honour; or because blessings were commonly pronounced by men with this ceremony, by laying their hands upon the head of the party blessed.

**Violence covereth the mouth of the wicked;** *violence* (either,

1. Their own violence or injustice, which may be here put for the fruit or punishment of it, as iniquity is oft put for the punishment of iniquity. Or,

2. Violence, or the violent, and injurious, and mischievous practices of others against them, deserved by their own violence committed against others, and inflicted upon them by the curse and righteous judgment of God) shall cover the mouth of the wicked, i.e. shall fall upon them. This phrase of covering their mouth is used, either,

1. With allusion to the ancient custom of covering the mouths and faces of condemned malefactors; of which see Est\_7:8 Job\_9:24. Or,

2. To signify that the curse and judgment of God upon them should be so manifestly just, that their mouths should be stopped, and they not be able to speak a word against God, or for themselves. Or,

3. To intimate that God's judgment upon them should be public and evident to all that behold them, as any covering put upon a man's mouth or face is, as for the same reason the blessings of the just were said to be upon their heads. And *the mouth* may be put for the *face* or *countenance*, by a synecdoche. But this clause is otherwise rendered by divers learned interpreters, *the mouth of the wicked covereth* (i.e. concealeth or smothereth within itself, and doth not utter that) *violence* or *injury*, which he meditateth in his heart, and designeth to do to others, and therefore shall be accursed and miserable. But this suits not so well with the former clause, wherein *the blessings of the just* are not meant actively, of those blessings which they wish or give to others, but passively, of those blessings which others wish or give to them; and consequently this violence is not understood of that which they do to others, but of that which is done to them by others.

Proverbs 10:7

**Is blessed**, i.e. honourable and acceptable to those who mention them. Compare Job\_31:20 Psa\_62:5.

**Shall rot**; shall perish, and be cursed and detestable amongst men, shall stink above ground.

Proverbs 10:8

**Will receive commandments;** is ready to hear and obey the counsels and precepts of God, and of men, by which means he shall stand fast and live.

**A prating fool;** one who is slow to hear and swift to speak, who, instead of receiving good admonitions, cavils and disputes against them. In the Hebrew he is called a fool of lips, either because he discovers the folly of his heart by his lips, and thereby exposeth himself to the mischief here following; or because he is without heart, as is said of Ephraim, Hos\_7:11, or his heart is little worth, as is said here, Pro\_10:20; or because he speaks rashly, without any consideration. Or it may be rendered, *a fool by his lips*, i.e. by his foolish and wicked speeches, contrary to the commands of God, by talking much and ill, when it is more comely and necessary for him to hear and receive instruction from others.

**Shall fall,** to wit, into mischief; or, be punished, as the word is used, Hos\_4:14; or, *be beaten*, as below, Pro\_10:10.

Proverbs 10:9

**He that walketh uprightly;** who is sincere, and just, and faithful in his dealings with God and with men.

**Surely;** or, *securely*, or *confidently*, as the word properly signifies, and is here rendered by all the ancient interpreters, and by most of the others; quietly resting upon God's favour and gracious providence for his protection, and being supported by the testimony of a good conscience, and therefore not fearing nor caring who knows or observes his actions, which he endeavours to approve both to God and to men.

**That perverteth his ways;** that walks perversely, or frowardly, or in crooked and sinful paths; that dealeth hypocritically and deceitfully with God, or with men, using all possible crafts to conceal his wickedness.

**Shall be known;** his wickedness shall be publicly discovered, and so he shall be exposed to all that shame and punishment which his sins deserve, and which he thought by his cunning practices to avoid.



Proverbs 10:10

**That winketh with the eye;** that secretly and cunningly designs mischiefs against others, as this phrase is used, Psa\_35:19 Pro\_6:13.

**Caused sorrow** to others, and afterwards to himself.

**But;** or, *and*, as it is in the Hebrew; for vice is not here opposed to virtue, as it is in many other proverbs, but one vice is compared with another.

**A prating fool;** who is so far from such deceits, that he runs into the other extreme, and *uttereth all his mind*, as is said of the fool, Pro\_29:11, and thereby speaks many things offensive to others, and mischievous to himself.

Proverbs 10:11

**A well of life;** continually sending forth waters of life, or such good and wholesome words as are very refreshing and useful, both to themselves and others, for the preserving of their natural life, and for the promoting of their spiritual and eternal life. We have the same phrase Psa\_36:9. Violence covereth the mouth of the wicked; the same words were used before, Pro\_10:6, where see the notes; and they may be understood in the same sense here, and the opposition of this clause to the former may be conceived thus: As the mouth of a good man speaketh those things which are good and beneficial to himself and others, so the mouth of the wicked uttereth violence, or injury, or things injurious to others. which at last fall upon himself. But it is no new thing for the same words and phrases to be taken in different senses in the same chapter, and sometimes in the same verse, as Mat\_8:22, and elsewhere; and therefore these words may here be, and are by many, translated and interpreted thus, *the mouth of the wicked covereth* (i.e. concealeth) *violence* or *mischief*, which he plotteth against others. And so here is a double opposition between the righteous and the wicked; first in the contrary effects, the former causeth life, the latter mischief and death; and secondly in the manner of producing them, the righteous doth it by uttering his words, and the wicked doth it by concealing his mind.

Proverbs 10:12

**Hatred stirreth up strifes** upon every slight occasion, by filling men with suspicions and surmises, whereby they imagine faults where there are none, and aggravate every small offence.

**Love covereth all sins;** either doth not severely observe, or doth willingly forget and forgive, the offences or injuries of others, and so preventeth contention and mischief.

Proverbs 10:13

**Wisdom is found;** his wisdom showeth itself in his prudent speeches, by which he escapeth that rod which fools meet with, and gaineth that reputation and advantage to himself which fools lose.

**A rod is for the back of him,** he may expect rebukes and punishments from God and men, that is void of understanding; which he showeth by his foolish words.

Proverbs 10:14

**Wise men lay up,** to wit, in their minds and memories, to be brought forth thence upon fit occasions,

**knowledge;** whereby they may be enabled to speak both what and when it is seasonable, for their own or others' good.

**The mouth of the foolish is near destruction;** fools are more forward to lay out than to lay up, and for want of knowledge speak much and foolishly, whereby they frequently bring destruction upon themselves

Proverbs 10:15

**Is his strong city;** either,

1. Really, as *money is* called *a defence* , Ecc\_7:12, because it oftentimes redeems a man from dangers and calamities. Or,

2. *In his own conceit* , as it is explained, and fully expressed, Pro\_18:11. It makes him secure and confident.

**The destruction;** it is the cause of their ruin. Or, *the contrition* , or *the terror* , or consternation, as others, both ancient and modern, render it. Their poverty takes away their spirit and courage, and fills them with fear and despair.

Proverbs 10:16

**The labour of the righteous tendeth to life:** either,

1. The design of his labour is only this, that he may have wherewith to live honestly, without sinful shifts. Or,

2. The fruit or effect of his labour or industry (as this word *labour* is most commonly understood, and this best answers to the following clause, where fruit is put instead of this *labour* ) is the preservation and prolongation of this life, and the obtaining of eternal life, to which an honest and conscientious diligence in men's worldly callings doth in some manner contribute. The fruit of the wicked, the fruit of all their labours and endeavours, to sin; tendeth to sin, serves only for fuel to men's pride, and luxury, and worldliness, and by that means oft causeth temporal, and always, without repentance, eternal death.

Proverbs 10:17

**The way of life;** which leadeth to life and blessedness. That keepeth instruction; that observeth and obeyeth the wholesome counsels of God, and of good men.

**Erreth,** to wit, from the way of life, or into the ways of sin, and so of death; Heb. *leadeth into error* , or *seduceth* , to wit, himself, as appears by the opposition of this to the former clause; he wittingly and willingly exposeth himself to temptation and wickedness, because he rejecteth that admonition which is a proper preservative from it.

Proverbs 10:18

**With lying lips;** with flattering words and false pretences of friendship.

**And he,** Heb. *he* , i. e both of them, one no less than the other. So he condemneth two opposite vices, secret hatred and manifest slander.

**Is a fool,** because a sinner, and because the mischief of these things will fall upon himself.

Proverbs 10:19

Men that love and commonly use much talking, do frequently run into many miscarriages, because such persons, for the most part,

want wisdom to order their words aright, Ecc\_5:3, and speak hastily, without care and consideration.

**That refraineth his lips;** that forbeareth to utter what cometh into his mind, before he hath weighed whether it be true and fit to be spoken or not.

Proverbs 10:20

**As choice silver;** of great worth and use, bringing credit to himself, and much benefit to others.

**The heart,** and consequently the tongue, which speaketh *out of the abundance of the heart*, Mat\_12:34.

Proverbs 10:21

**Feed many,** by their wise and pious discourses, counsels, and comforts, which are so many evidences of their wisdom.

**Die for want of wisdom;** they have not wisdom to feed or preserve themselves, much less to feed others.

Proverbs 10:22

Riches are not got by wisdom or diligence, but only by God's favour and blessing.

**He addeth no sorrow with it,** i.e. with that blessing which gives riches, but gives them content and comfort in their riches, which is a singular gift and blessing of God, of which see Ecc\_2:24,**26 3:13 5:18,19**; whereas the riches which wicked men get are attended with God's curse, with many discontents, with tormenting cares and fears, with horrors of conscience, and with the just dread of a sad account to God for them.

Proverbs 10:23

**As sport;** he doth it with ease and delight, and without any shame, or remorse, or fear.

**To do mischief** or, as others, *to work wickedness*; yea, great and premeditated wickedness, as the Hebrew word properly signifies.

**Hath wisdom;** whereby he is kept from committing wickedness, and especially from sporting himself with it. But this clause is by divers learned interpreters rendered thus, and so is wisdom to a man of understanding, it is a sport or pleasure to him to practise

wisdom or piety; which translation makes the opposition more evident.

Proverbs 10:24

**The fear;** the evils which he feareth, or hath cause to fear, as fear is oft taken.

**Shall be granted;** God will not only prevent the mischiefs which they fear, but grant them the good things which they desire.

Proverbs 10:25

**As the whirlwind passeth;** which is suddenly gone, though with great noise and violence.

**So is the wicked no more;** his power and felicity is lost in an instant.

**Is an everlasting foundation;** or, hath *an everlasting* , &c. His hope and happiness is built upon a sure and unmovable foundation.

Proverbs 10:26

**As vinegar to the teeth;** Which by its cold and sharpness it offends.

**So is the sluggard;** unserviceable and vexatious.

Proverbs 10:27

**Prolongeth days;** partly because it gives them a title to the promise of long life, as well as to other promises; partly because it gladdeth the heart, which doth good like a medicine, Pro\_17:22, and preserves a man from those wicked practices which tend to the shortening of the days.

Proverbs 10:28

**Shall be gladness;** though at present it be mixed with doubts, and fears, and disappointments, yet at last it shall be accomplished, and turned into enjoyment.

**Shall perish;** shall be utterly frustrated, and so end in sorrow.

Proverbs 10:29

**The way of the Lord;** either,

1. The way or course of God's providence in the government of the world. Or rather,

2. The way of God's precepts, as God's way or ways are most commonly understood in Scripture, or walking in God's ways; for this is opposed to working iniquity in the next clause.

**Is strength;** gives strength, i.e. either courage and confidence, or support and protection from that destruction here following.

**Destruction,** or *terror* , or

**consternation,** as the word properly signifies, and many render it. The design of this verse is to show that piety is the only true policy.

Proverbs 10:30

**The righteous shall never be removed;** they shall live long and happily here, when this is most expedient for them, and eternally in heaven.

**The wicked shall not inhabit the earth;** they shall not have so much as a long and quite abode upon earth, unless where this is a curse and mischief to them, and much less shall they have any possession in heaven.

Proverbs 10:31

**Bringeth forth,** freely, and abundantly, and constantly, as the earth or a tree bring forth their proper fruit, as the word properly signifies.

**Wisdom;** wise counsels, by which he directeth and secureth himself and others.

**Shall be cut out,** because it bringeth forth not wisdom, but folly and wickedness.

Proverbs 10:32

**Know,** to wit, practically, so as to consider and speak. Knowledge is here ascribed to the *lips* , as it is to the hands Psa\_78:72, because they are conducted by knowledge and wisdom.

**What is acceptable** to God and good men, or what is truly worthy of acceptance; for this is opposed to what is *froward* or wicked in the next clause.

## **Proverbs 11:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 11

**A false balance**, the use of all false weights and measures in commerce,

**is abomination**, i.e. highly abominable, as the abstract signifies; which is opposed to the false opinion of men, who account it a fineness of wit, or, at worst, but a trivial fault.

**To the Lord**; partly because this wickedness is acted under a colour of justice; and partly because it is destructive to human society, and especially to the poor, whose patron the Lord owneth himself to be.

Proverbs 11:2

**When pride cometh, then cometh shame**; pride, as it is the effect of folly, so it bringeth a man to contempt and destruction, such persons being commonly hated both by God and by all men.

**With the lowly is wisdom**; whereby they are kept from those foolish and wicked actions which expose men to shame.

Proverbs 11:3

**The integrity of the upright**, their sincere obedience to God's laws,

**shall guide them**; shall keep them from crooked and dangerous courses, and lead them in a right and safe way.

**The perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them**; those wicked devices by which they design and expect to secure themselves, shall be the instrument of their destruction.

Proverbs 11:4

**In the day of wrath**; in the time of God's judgments, when he is executing wrath and vengeance upon sinners.

**Righteousness**, or *mercy*, as this word is oft rendered; or charity to the poor, which is fitly opposed to riches laid up in store.

**Delivereth from death**; it moveth God to deliver them oftentimes from temporal calamities, and always from eternal death, where such actions are done from a right principle.

Proverbs 11:5

**Shall direct his way;** shall bring all his designs and endeavours to a happy issue, by comparing this clause with the next.

Proverbs 11:6

**Shall deliver them** from many snares and dangers.

Proverbs 11:7

**His expectation shall perish;** all his hope and felicity, which he placed wholly in earthly things, is lost and gone with him.

**The hope of unjust men;** so it is a repetition of the same thing in other words. Or, as divers render it, *the hope of their strengths*, i.e. which they place in their carnal strengths, their riches, children, friends, &c. So this is added by way of aggravation.

Proverbs 11:8

Is by God's providence brought into the same miseries, which either he designed against the righteous, or had formerly inflicted upon the righteous, and now lately removed from them.

Proverbs 11:9

**With his mouth;** by his corrupt communication, whereby he endeavours to draw him to error or wickedness.

**Through knowledge,** to wit, of God, and of his word, which makes men wise, and discovers, and so prevents, the frauds of deceivers.

**Be delivered** from the infection of the hypocrite's evil and crafty counsel.

Proverbs 11:10

**When it goeth well with the righteous,** when such men are encouraged and advanced into places of power and trust, the city rejoiceth; the citizens or subjects of that government rejoice, because they confidently expect justice and tranquillity, and many other benefits, by their administration of public affairs.

**There is shouting;** a common rejoicing, partly for the just vengeance of God upon them who have been the instruments of so much mischief; and partly for their deliverance from such public grievances and burdens of the land.



Proverbs 11:11

**By the blessing of the upright**, where with they bless the city, to wit, by their sincere prayers, and wise and wholesome counsels.

**By the mouth of the wicked**; by their curses, and oaths, and blasphemies, and wicked and pernicious counsels, whereby they both provoke God, and mislead men to their own ruin.

Proverbs 11:12

**Despiseth his neighbour**; which contempt he showeth, either,

1. By contemptuous or reproachful expressions of him; or,
2. By not asking or not regarding his advice, but trusting wholly to his own understanding.

**Holdeth his peace**; either,

1. He forbeareth all such expressions against his neighbour. Or,
2. He silently and patiently bears these reproaches from his neighbour, and doth not render one reproach for another; wherein he showeth true wisdom. Or,
3. He desireth and hearkeneth to the counsels of others. Any of these ways the opposition is sufficiently evident.

Proverbs 11:13

**A tale-bearer**, or, *he that goeth about* (from one place or person to another, as the manner of such is) *telling tales*, making it his business to scatter reports, revealeth secrets; this tattling humour is so prevalent with him, that he cannot forbear to publish, either his neighbour's secret faults, or such things as were committed to his trust with a charge of secrecy.

**He that is of a faithful spirit**, that hath a sincere, and constant, and faithful mind, which both can and will govern his tongue,

**concealeth the matter**, so far as he can lawfully do.

Proverbs 11:14

**No counsel**; or, *no wise counsel*, as the word properly signifies, as Job\_37:12 Pro\_1:5.

**In the multitude of counsellors**, to wit, of wise and good counsellors, for such will employ and unite their counsels together for the public good.

Proverbs 11:15

**A stranger;** whose condition he doth not thoroughly understand, and therefore knows not his own danger.

**Suretiship;** of which See Poole "Pro\_6:1".

Proverbs 11:16

**A gracious woman,** Heb. a *woman of grace and favour* , i.e. one who by her meekness, and modesty, and prudence, and other virtues, renders herself acceptable and amiable to God and to men.

**Retaineth honour,** or *holdeth fast her honour* or good reputation, with no less care and resolution than strong men do riches, as it here follows.

**And strong men retain riches;** or, *as strong men* , &c.; for so this conjunction is oft used in this book, of which we have seen some, and may afterwards see more instances.

Proverbs 11:17

**To his own soul,** i.e. to himself, because his liberality shall turn to his own infinite advantage, both in this life and in the next. Cruel; hard-hearted and uncharitable to others.

**His own flesh;** either,

1. His own children or kindred, who are commonly expressed by this very word, for whose sakes he is thus covetous and uncharitable, that he may hoard it up for them; but they, saith the wise man, shall have nothing but trouble and vexation, and God's curse with it. Or,

2. Himself, denominated here from his flesh or body, as in the former branch from his soul. But he may seem to mention his flesh rather than his soul, to intimate that the mischiefs of his covetousness shall not only fall upon his soul, which he despiseth, but upon his flesh or outward man, which is the only thing that he feareth.

Proverbs 11:18

**A deceitful work;** a work which will deceive his expectation of that good for which he worketh.

**That soweth;** that worketh it with constancy, and diligence, and hope of recompence, as they do who sow in seed-time.

**Righteousness;** good works, acts of piety towards God, and charity to men.

Proverbs 11:19

**That pursueth evil;** who are not overtaken by sin, as a good man may be, Gal\_6:1, but studiously design it, and follow after the occasions of it earnestly, and greedily, and industriously.

Proverbs 11:20

**They that are of a froward heart;** hypocrites, as appears from the opposition of these to the *upright* in the next clause; whose hearts are false to God, and contrary to their own professions.

**Are abomination to the Lord;** though by their cunning artifices they may deceive men, and gain their good opinion and favour, yet God sees their naughty hearts, and hateth them.

**In their way;** in the course of their lives and actions. By which changing of the phrase from *heart* in the first clause, to way here, he intimates that the sincerity and hypocrisy of men's hearts are discovered and to be judged by their conversations.

Proverbs 11:21

**Though hand join in hand;** though they are fortified against God's judgments by a numerous issue, and kindred, and friends, and by mutual strong combinations or confederacies. Shall not be unpunished; they shall be punished even in their own persons, as well as in their posterity. They shall not be able either totally to prevent God's judgment, or to delay it from coming in their days.

**The seed of the righteous,** not only their persons, but their children, shall be delivered, without any such auxiliaries, by God's special providence.

Proverbs 11:22

**As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout;** which would not adorn the swine, but only be disparaged itself. It was the custom of some of the Jews to wear jewels upon their noses, and some of their neighbours wore them in their noses.

**Which is without discretion;** which disgraceth the beauty of her body by a foolish and filthy soul.

Proverbs 11:23

**The desire;** either,

1. Properly so called. So the sense is, His desires are generally and constantly to do good to men, as wicked men's designs are to do hurt, and to execute wrath and hatred against them. Or rather,

2. The object, or event, or effect of their desire, as appears from the next clause, where

**expectation** is clearly put for the object or event of it. And the sense of the proverb seems to be this, The desires and expectations of the righteous shall end in their good and happiness, but the desires and expectations of wicked men shall be sadly disappointed, and end in the wrath of God and their utter ruin.

Proverbs 11:24

**That scattereth;** that giveth liberally of his goods to the poor; for so this Hebrew word is used, Psa\_112:9, He hath dispersed, which is explained in the following words, he hath given to the poor.

**Increaseth,** through God's secret blessing upon his estate.

**More than is meet,** Heb. *from what is right or just*, i.e. what by the law of God, and the rules of general justice, he is obliged to give; of which see Pro\_3:27.

**It tendeth to poverty;** by God's providence secretly blasting his estate, either in his own or his children's hands, as it very frequently befalls covetous wretches.

Proverbs 11:25

**The liberal soul,** Heb. *the soul of blessing*; that man who is a blessing to others, who blesseth them, i.e. doeth good to them, as blessing is oft used for a gift, as Gen\_33:11 1Sa\_25:27 2Co\_9:5.

**Shall be made fat;** shall be greatly enriched, both with temporal and spiritual blessings.

**He that watereth shall be watered also himself** possibly it is a metaphor from a fountain, which when it poureth forth its waters is instantly filled again, whereas if it be stopped it groweth empty, and the water seeketh another course. Others render it, *he shall be*

*a rain* , i.e. he shall receive such liberal supplies from God, that he shall be able to pour forth showers of good things upon others.

Proverbs 11:26

**Withholdeth corn**, in a time of scarcity, when others need and desire it.

**Blessing**; the blessing of God, which the people shall heartily beg for him.

**That selleth it** upon reasonable terms.

Proverbs 11:27

**He that diligently seeketh**, which is opposed to those who content themselves with lazy desires, or cold and careless endeavours, good, to do good to all men, as he hath opportunity,

**procureth favour with God** and men.

**He that seeketh mischief**, to do any mischief or injury to others,

**it shall come unto him**; it shall be requited either by men's malice and revenge, or by God's just judgment.

Proverbs 11:28

**He that trusteth in his riches**, as his chief portion, and felicity, and ground of safety,

**shall fall**, as a withered leaf, by comparing this clause with the latter.

**The righteous**, who maketh God alone, and not riches, his trust,

**shall flourish as a branch**, to wit, a green and flourishing branch.

Proverbs 11:29

**He that troubleth his own house**; he who bringeth trouble and misery upon himself and children, either,

1. By carelessness, slothfulness, improvidence, prodigality, or any wickedness, whereby he consumeth his estate. So this *troubling* of his house may be opposed to a man's *building of his house* , Jer\_29:28. Or,

2. By covetous desires and restless endeavours to heap up riches, whereby he greatly tires and troubles both himself and all his

family with excessive cares and labours, which is called *coveting an evil covetousness to his house* , Hab\_2:9.

**Shall inherit the wind;** shall be as unable to keep and enjoy what he gets as a man is to hold the wind in his fist, or to feed and satisfy himself with it; he shall be brought to poverty.

**The fool shall be servant to the wise of heart;** by which means such a troublesome fool shall through his extreme necessity be forced even to sell himself to such as are wiser.

Proverbs 11:30

**The fruit of the righteous,** i.e. which he produceth; his discourses and his whole conversation.

**Is a tree of life;** is like the fruit of the tree of life; is a great preserver of his life, and a procurer of eternal life, not only to himself, but to others also.

**He that winneth souls,** Heb. *that catcheth souls* , as a fowler doth birds; that maketh it his design and business, and useth all his skill and diligence, to gain souls to God, and to pluck them out of the snare of the devil.

**Is wise;** showeth himself to be a truly wise and good man. But this clause is and may be rendered thus, *and he that is wise* (the same with the *righteous* in the former clause) *winneth souls* , or brings them to life. So this clause agrees very well with the former.

Proverbs 11:31

**The righteous shall be recompensed,** i.e. punished for his sins, as appears from the next clause; the general word being here used of this one particular, by a synecdoche. *In the earth* ; whereby he intimates that all his sufferings are confined to this world, which is an unspeakable felicity.

**Much more,** they shall be punished more certainly and more severely, either in this life or in the next,

**the wicked and the sinner;** those who make sin their great study, and daily and most delightful exercise. Compare this verse with 1Pe\_4:18, which is a good comment upon it.

## **Proverbs 12:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 12

**Instruction;** admonition or reproof, as appears from the next clause, which is a singular means of getting true and sound knowledge.

**Loveth knowledge;** showeth that he is a true lover of knowledge, because he is willing to purchase it upon such unwelcome terms, as reproofs are generally esteemed.

**Is brutish;** discovereth himself to be a most foolish and stupid creature, because he is an enemy to himself and to his own happiness.

Proverbs 12:2

**Obtaineth favour;** whereby he is and shall be acquitted and justified.

**A man of wicked devices,** who designeth and industriously committeth wickedness, will he condemn, when he standeth in judgment, howsoever he may for the present justify himself, and deceive others into a good opinion of him.

Proverbs 12:3

**By wickedness;** by any sinful courses by which he useth to secure or stablish himself; whereby he implies that he shall be rooted up.

**Shall not be moved,** to wit, out of its place. He shall stand fast, and flourish, like a well-rooted tree.

Proverbs 12:4

**A crown;** a singular ornament and matter of his glorying and joy.

**That maketh ashamed;** that by her folly or wickedness bringeth shame to herself and to her husband. As rottenness in his bones; loathsome, and vexatious, and pernicious.

Proverbs 12:5

**The thoughts of the righteous are right;** his constant purpose is to deal justly and truly with God and with men.

**The counsels of the wicked are deceit;** his great care and contrivance is to wrong and deceive others by fair pretences and cunning artifices.

Proverbs 12:6

**Are to lie in wait for blood;** are designed and ordered to entrap or deceive others, and to destroy them.

**Shall deliver them,** to wit, from those that lie in wait for them; which it doth, either,

1. By prayer to God for their deliverance; or,
2. By pacifying the wicked with soft and gentle answers, or by diverting them from their evil course by their good counsels and admonitions; or,
3. By pleading their righteous cause in a judicial or other way.

Proverbs 12:7

**Are not;** both they and their families shall suddenly perish. The house; the family or posterity.

Proverbs 12:8

**A man shall be commended,** to wit, by wise and good men, according to his wisdom; more or less according to the degree of wisdom which his discourses and actions discover to be in him.

**He that is of a perverse heart,** which he showeth by his wicked words and conversation, shall be despised by God and all wise men.

Proverbs 12:9

**That is despised;** that liveth in a mean and obscure condition in the world, for such are commonly despised by men of a higher rank.

**Hath a servant;** hath but one servant. Or rather, *is servant to himself*; hath none to wait upon him or work for him but himself, that getteth bread by his own labours.

**Is better,** is happier, than he that honoureth himself, that glorieth in his high birth or gay attire, and lacketh bread, wants necessaries for his own sustenance.

Proverbs 12:10

**Regardeth the life of his beast,** which is employed in his service; he will not destroy it either by labours beyond its strength, or by



denying to it necessary food or rest, or by any other way; and much more will he be pitiful to his own servants, and to poor men.

**The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel;** there is much cruelty mixed even with their most merciful actions, when they pretend or intend to show mercy. Heb. *the bowels of the* , &c.; those very bowels, which in others are the seat of pity, in him are hardened and shut up, and only stir him up to cruelty. Instead of that mercy which is natural to other men, he hath nothing but cruelty. Their

**mercies** are here said to be

**cruel**, as

**the foolishness and weakness of God** are said to be *wise and strong* , 1Co\_1:25.

Proverbs 12:11

**That tilleth his land;** that employeth his time and strength in an honest calling.

**That followeth vain persons;** that useth their society and idle course of living.

**Is void of understanding;** shall through his own folly want bread.

Proverbs 12:12

**The wicked desireth the net of evil men;** he approveth and useth those cunning and deceitful arts, which wicked men use like nets to insnare other men, and to take their goods to themselves. Or, *he desireth the fortress of wicked men* , or *of wickedness* , i.e. he seeks to fortify and stablish himself by wicked practices.

**The root of the righteous yieldeth fruit;** that justice and piety in which he is rooted, and which is the root of his actions, doth of itself, without the aid of any indirect and sinful courses, yield him sufficient fruit, both for his own need, and to do good to others. But because the word *fruit* is not in the Hebrew, and may seem to be too great a supplement, it is and may be rendered thus, *the root of the righteous giveth it* , to wit, that fortress or security which others seek in wickedness.

Proverbs 12:13

**The wicked is snared**, i.e. brought into trouble,

**by the transgression of his lips**, by his wicked speeches against God and men. The just shall come out of trouble, to wit, by his wise, and holy, and inoffensive speeches, whereby he pacifieth men, and gaineth God's favour and protection.

Proverbs 12:14

**By the fruit of his mouth**; by his pious and profitable discourses.

**Of a man's hands**, i.e. of his works and actions, of which the hand is the great instrument; whereby also may be implied that God will not regard nor recompense good works, unless they be accompanied with a good conversation.

**Shall be rendered unto him**, to wit, by God, to whom the work of retribution belongs.

Proverbs 12:15

**The way of a fool**, the counsel and course which his own mind suggests to him in ordering of his affairs,

**is right in his own eyes**; highly pleaseth him, so that he neglects and despiseth the opinions and advices of others.

**He that hearkeneth unto counsel**; that distrusteth his own judgment, and seeketh counsel from others.

Proverbs 12:16

**Is presently known**, by his rash words and indecent actions, whereby he exposeth himself to shame.

**Covereth shame**; either,

1. The shame, or reproach, or injury done to him by others, which he concealeth and beareth with patience, and passeth by, as his duty and interest obligeth him to do. Or,

2. His own shame, to which the folly of rash anger would have betrayed him.

Proverbs 12:17

**He that speaketh truth**, Heb.

**He that will speak truth**, i.e. he who accustometh himself to speak truth in common conversation; for the future tense in the Hebrew tongue oft notes a continued act or habit.

**Showeth forth righteousness**, to wit, as a witness in public judgment; he will speak nothing but what is true and just; you may depend upon his testimony.

**But a false witness deceit**; he who useth himself to lying in his common talk will use falsehood and deceit in judgment.

Proverbs 12:18

**Speaketh like the piercings of a sword**, hurtful and pernicious words, whereby they either corrupt men's minds and manners, or scandalize them, or injure them in their reputation, estate, or life, or otherwise.

**The tongue of the wise is health**; his speech, both in judgment and in common discourse, is sound and wholesome in itself, and tending to the comfort and benefit of others.

Proverbs 12:19

The speaker of truth is constant, and always agreeable to himself, and his words, the more and longer they are tried, the more doth the truth of them appear; whereas liars, though they may make a fair show for a season, yet are easily and quickly convicted of falsehood.

Proverbs 12:20

**Deceit**; either,

1. Towards others, whom they design to deceive, and then to destroy, whilst good counsellors bring safety and joy to others. Or rather,

2. To themselves. So the sense of the verse is, They whose hearts devise mischief against others shall be deceived in their hopes, and bring that trouble upon themselves which they design against others; but they who by good counsels labour to promote the peace and happiness of others, shall reap the comfort and benefit of it to themselves.

Proverbs 12:21

**No evil**; either,

1. Of sin; or rather,

2. Of suffering or mischief, as the next clause explains this. No such evil shall befall them as doth commonly befall the wicked,

who are filled, or overwhelmed, and utterly destroyed by it; whereas good men are supported under their troubles, and shall be delivered out of them, and receive much benefit by them.

Proverbs 12:22

**That deal truly;** that speak and act sincerely and truly. He implies, that although lying lips alone are sufficient to purchase God's hatred, yet truth in a man's speech is not sufficient to procure God's favour, unless there be also truth and justice in his actions.

Proverbs 12:23

**Concealeth knowledge;** he doth not vain-gloriously and unseasonably utter what he knows, but keeps it in his breast till he hath a fit occasion to bring it forth for God's glory, and the good of others.

**Proclaimeth foolishness;** whilst he makes ostentation of his knowledge, he betrays his ignorance and folly. Compare Ecc\_10:3.

Proverbs 12:24

**Shall bear rule;** shall procure wealth and power.

**The slothful,** Heb. *the deceitful* . So he calls the slothful, because deceit and idleness are commonly companions, and such men seek to gain by fraud what they either cannot or will not get by honest labour. Compare Pro\_10:4.

Proverbs 12:25

A compassionate or encouraging word from a friend or minister.

Proverbs 12:26

**More excellent;** either,

1. In his temper and disposition, more just, and generous, and public-spirited, and merciful, &c. Or,
2. In his condition, more happy, notwithstanding all his sufferings and the contrary opinion of the world concerning them.

**Than his neighbour;** than any other men.

**Seduceth them,** Heb. *maketh them to err or wander* , to lose that excellency or happiness which they had promised to themselves in and by their wicked practices.

Proverbs 12:27

**The slothful man;** or, the deceitful man, as Pro\_12:24, who seeks to enrich himself by fraudulent and unjust practices.

**Roasteth not that which he took in hunting;** doth not enjoy the fruit of his labours or devices, either because he doth not labour, and so hath nothing to waste or enjoy; or because God oftentimes deprives him either of such ill-gotten goods, or at least of a quiet and comfortable fruition of them.

**Is precious;** yields him great comfort and satisfaction, partly because it abides with him, and partly because he hath God's favour and blessing with it.

Proverbs 12:28

The practice of justice and godliness, though it expose a man to some dangers and inconveniences in the world, yet it will certainly lead him to life and happiness, whereas the end of all wicked courses is death and destruction.

### **Proverbs 13:1 PROVERBS CHAPTER 13**

**Heareth;** which word is understood out of the next clause, as is frequent in the Hebrew text.

**Instruction;** or, rebuke or reproof.

**Heareth not rebuke;** he hateth reproof, either from his father or from any other man.

Proverbs 13:2

**Shall eat good;** shall receive much comfort, and credit, and benefit to himself.

**By the fruit of his mouth;** by his wise and profitable discourses.

**The soul,** i.e. the person, as the soul is oft used.

**The transgressors;** who transgress with their lips, as this general phrase may be restrained from the former clause.

**Shall eat violence;** shall have that violence and injury returned upon themselves, which they have offered to others in word or deed.

Proverbs 13:3

**He that keepeth his mouth,** to wit, to the opening of it; who speaks sparingly, and with due care and caution;

**keepeth his life;** prevents many sins and mischiefs which others run into. *He that openeth wide his lips* , that takes liberty to speak every thing which pleaseth him, or cometh into his mind, shall have destruction, from God or men.

Proverbs 13:4

**Hath nothing,** because he contenteth himself with lazy desires without diligent endeavours.

**Shall be made fat;** he shall be enriched with the fruit of his own labours.

Proverbs 13:5

**Hateth lying,** both in himself and in other men, whereby he getteth that good name which is like a precious ointment.

**A wicked man;** who accustometh himself to lying, as may be gathered from the foregoing words.

**Cometh to shame;** makes himself contemptible and hateful to all that know him; there being scarce any reproach which men more impatiently endure, and severely revenge, than that of being called or accounted a liar.

Proverbs 13:6

**Keepeth him;** either from sin, or from that overthrow which befalls sinners, in the next clause.

**The sinner,** Heb. *the man of sin* , who giveth up himself to wicked courses.

Proverbs 13:7

Some men who have little or nothing pretend to have great riches, and carry themselves accordingly; either out of pride and vanity, or with a design to gain reputation with others whom they intend to defraud. Some rich men seem and profess themselves to be very poor, that they may preserve and increase their estates, by

concealing them from those who would either desire a share in them, or take them away by deceit or violence.

Proverbs 13:8

This verse sets forth, either,

1. The several advantages of riches and poverty. Riches enable a man to redeem his life when it is in greatest danger, and poverty preserves a man from those rebukes and injuries which endanger and oft destroy the rich. Or,

2. The convenience of poverty above riches. Riches frequently expose men to the peril of losing their lives by false accusers, or thieves, or tyrants, which they are forced to redeem with the loss of their riches; whereas poverty commonly secures men not only from such kinds of death, but even from rebukes and injuries; partly because such persons are cautious that they may not offend or provoke others; and partly because their persons and actions are neglected and slighted, and they are esteemed objects of pity.

Proverbs 13:9

**The light;** the prosperity or happiness, which is oft called a *light or lamp* in Scripture, and other authors.

**Rejoiceth;** shineth with a pleasant and constant brightness and glory; for this is opposed to the putting out in the next clause. *Rejoicing* is here ascribed to the light, as it is to the sun, Psa\_19:5, both metaphorically, because they would rejoice in it if they were capable of any such passions; and metonymically, because they refresh and cheer men's spirits. So mountains and trees are said to rejoice, Psa\_65:12 **96:12**.

**The lamp of the wicked shall be put out;** their felicity shall have a sudden and a dismal end.

Proverbs 13:10

**Only by pride cometh contention;** which is not to be understood exclusively as to all other causes; for contentions oft spring from ignorance, or mistake, or covetousness, or other passions: but eminently, because as pride bloweth up those coals of contention which other lusts kindle, so oftentimes pride alone, without any other cause, stirreth up strife; which it doth by making a man self-

conceited in his opinions, and obstinate in his resolutions, and impatient of any opposition, and many other ways.

**With the well-advised**, who are not governed by their own passions, but by prudent consideration, and the good counsel of others, *is wisdom* ; which teacheth them to avoid and abhor all contention.

Proverbs 13:11

**By vanity**; by vain, or deceitful, or wicked practices. *Shall be diminished* , because the curse of God attends upon it.

**By labour**; by diligence in an honest calling.

Proverbs 13:12

**Hope deferred**; delays in obtaining that good which a man passionately desireth and hopeth for.

**The desire**; the good desired and expected; acts being oft put for the objects,

**It is a tree of life**; it is most sweet, and satisfactory, and reviving.

Proverbs 13:13

**Despiseth**; disobeyeth it wilfully and presumptuously. *The word* ; the word of God, which is called the word by way of eminency, Deu\_30:14, compared with Rom\_10:18 1Th\_5:17, and elsewhere.

**Shall be destroyed**, except he repent, and return to his obedience.

**That feareth the commandment**; that hath a reverence to its authority, and is afraid to violate it.

Proverbs 13:14

**The law**; the doctrine, instruction, or counsel; as the word law is frequently understood in Scripture.

**Of the wise**; of holy men, who are commonly called wise, as sinners are called fools, in this book.

Proverbs 13:15

**Good understanding**; discovering itself by a man's holy and righteous practices and ways, as appears from the opposition of

**the way of transgressors** to it; and as words of understanding in this and other books of Scripture commonly include practice.



**Giveth favour;** maketh a man acceptable both to God and men.

**The way;** the carriage or manner of conversation.

**Is hard;** or, *rough*, as this very word is used, Deu\_21:4; offensive and hateful to God and men, as rough ways are to a traveller; fierce, and intractable, and incorrigible.

Proverbs 13:16

**Dealeth,** Heb. *acteth*, or

**doth,** manageth all his affairs, with knowledge; considerately and discreetly.

**Layeth open his folly,** by his heady and foolish actions.

Proverbs 13:17

**A wicked messenger,** who is unfaithful in the execution of that which is committed to his charge, as appears by the opposite clause,

**falleth into mischief;** shall not escape punishment from God, or from them who sent him.

**Is health;** or, *wholesome*; procureth safety and benefit, as to his master, so also to himself.

Proverbs 13:18

**Instruction;** whereby he might have been kept from destructive and dishonourable courses.

**He that regardeth reproof,** that considers it seriously, receiveth it kindly, and reformeth himself by it, shall be honoured, and enriched, which is implied from the former branch. Not that it is so always, but commonly, and when God sees it good for a man. Or if he do not always gain riches, he shall certainly have honour both from God and men.

Proverbs 13:19

**The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul;** the satisfaction of a man's desires by the enjoyment of the things desired is very acceptable to him; which may be taken either,

1. Of the desire of fools, which may be understood out of the next clause. So the sense of the verse is, It is sweet to sinners to indulge and satisfy their desires, which are wholly carnal and

sinful, and for that reason they love sin, and hate the thoughts of leaving it, because their desires are wholly and fully set upon it. Or,

2. Of good desires, or of the desires of wise and good men, as the LXX., and Chaldee, and Syriac, and Arabic interpreters understand it, by the opposition of

**fools** in the next clause. So the sense may be this. The desires of good men are set upon what is good, and they rejoice when they attain to it, and are grieved when they fall short of it; but the desires of the wicked are set upon sin, and it is a pleasure to them to commit it, and an abomination to them to be hindered from it. Or rather,

3. Of desires in general. Whatsoever men do earnestly desire, the enjoyment of it is very sweet and grateful to them; and therefore sinners rejoice in the pursuit and satisfaction of their sinful lusts, and abhor all restraint and mortification of them. For this is certain and confessed, that many things are understood in these short proverbial speeches which are not expressed.

**But;** or, *and*, as this particle properly signifies; or, *therefore*, as it is frequently used.

Proverbs 13:20

**Walketh;** commonly converseth and associateth himself.

**Shall be wise;** shall learn wisdom and goodness, both from their counsels and examples. The design of this proverb is to show the wonderful influence which a man's society hath upon him, either to save, or to corrupt and destroy him.

Proverbs 13:21

**Evil;** evil of punishment proportionable to their evil of sin, as appears from the next clause.

**Pursueth;** and sooner or later shall certainly overtake them, albeit they please themselves with hopes of impunity.

**Sinners;** obstinate and incorrigible sinners.

**Good;** God's blessings and true happiness.

Proverbs 13:22

Is by God's powerful providence oftentimes translated to good men of another family, who will be more faithful stewards of it.

Proverbs 13:23

**Much food is in the tillage of the poor;** poor and mean persons, by their diligent labours in tillage or other employments, and God's blessing upon them, oftentimes grow rich.

**Destroyed;** or, *consumed* , to wit, in his estate, brought to poverty.

**For want of judgment;** either,

1. For want of discretion and convenient care and diligence in tilling his land, and in managing his affairs, which he neglects himself, and leaves to the care of others; whereas poor men are forced by their necessities to look to their own concerns, and to use their utmost diligence in them. Or rather,

2. By injustice, as this phrase is used, Pro\_16:8 Jer\_17:11 **22:13** Eze\_22:29. Nor do I find it in any other scripture. By his frauds, rapines, and oppressions, and other unjust and wicked practices, whereby he seeks to enrich himself, as refusing and scorning to get an estate by honest labours. So this agrees with what is said Pro\_13:11.

Proverbs 13:24

**He that spareth,** Heb. *withholdeth* it from his son when it is due to him,

**his rod,** that correction which his son's fault requires, and he as a father is required to give him,

**hateth his son;** not directly and properly in regard of his affection, but consequently, and in respect of the event. His fond affection is as pernicious to him as his or another man's hatred could be.

**Chasteneth him betimes;** either,

1. In his tender years, as soon as he is capable of it. Or,

2. Speedily, before he be hardened and inveterate in sin. God's favour and blessing gives the righteous man a competent estate,

and a heart to use it, and comfort and satisfaction in it; whereas wicked men commonly want either all these blessings, or some of them.

Proverbs 13:25

God's favour and blessing gives the righteous man a competent estate, and a heart to use it, and comfort and satisfaction in it; whereas wicked men commonly want either all these blessings, or some of them.

### **Proverbs 14:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 14

He speaks of the woman not to exclude the man, of whom this is no less true, but because the women, especially in those times, were very industrious in managing their husbands' estates; of which see **Pr 31**.

**Buildeth her house;** maintaineth and improveth her family and estate, as this phrase is used, Exo\_1:21 2Sa\_7:11 Psa\_127:1.

**Plucketh it down with her hands;** either by her idleness and not using her hands, or by her foolish and sinful courses.

Proverbs 14:2

**That walketh in his uprightness;** whose conversation is sincerely pious and righteous. The design of this proverb and verse is to show that God doth, and men may, judge of men's outward professions and inward dispositions by the common course of their lives.

**Despiseth him;** plainly declares that he doth not fear God, but despise him, and his commands and threatenings.

Proverbs 14:3

**A rod of pride:** their proud and insolent speeches, as they are like a rod, offensive and injurious to others, so they make a rod for their own hacks, by provoking God and man against them; which sense seems most probable, both from the opposite clause, and by comparing this place with Pro\_10:13 **26:3**. For this phrase,

**the rod of pride,** it may be compared with other like phrases, as *the foot of pride* , Psa\_36:11, *the scourge of the tongue* , Job\_5:21, and *the rod of the mouth* , Isa\_11:4.

**Shall preserve them,** from that rod.

Proverbs 14:4

**The crib is clean;** the barn or stable is empty of food for cattle, and much more for man, whose food is more scarce and dear. In the same sense *cleanness of teeth* is put for famine, Amo\_4:6.

**By the strength of the ox;** by their labours, or by diligence in husbandry, which then was principally managed by oxen.

Proverbs 14:5

**Will not lie,** to wit, in common discourse and conversation, whereby he showeth his love to truth, and giveth assurance that when he is called to be a witness, he will be true and faithful.

**But a false witness will utter lies;** or, as the words lie in the Hebrew, *and* or *but* he that

**will utter lies** (that accustometh himself to lying) is or will be a false witness, when occasion requires it. Having debauched his conscience by daily lying, he is thereby prepared and disposed to false witness-bearing. Compare Pro\_12:17.

Proverbs 14:6

**A scorner;** a proud, self-conceited, and profane person.

**Findeth it not,** because he doth not seek it aright, to wit, sincerely, and earnestly, and seasonably, and in a constant and diligent use of all the means which God hath appointed to that end, and with an honest intention of employing his knowledge to the service of God, and the furtherance of his practice of religion.

**Knowledge is easy unto him,** is plain and easily attained by him,

**that understandeth;** that knoweth and is deeply sensible of his own want of knowledge, and of the great worth and necessity of knowledge, which will make him use all possible means to it, and, among other ways, pray earnestly to God for it. Or, that is honest and pious; for words of knowledge are oft understood practically, especially in this book.

Proverbs 14:7

Avoid the company and conversation of ungodly men, when they break forth into foolish or wicked discourses, lest thou either be infected by them, or seem to approve of them.

Proverbs 14:8

**The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way;** it consists not in vain speculations, nor in a curious prying into other men's matters, nor in cunning arts of deceiving others; but in a diligent study of his own duty, and of the way to true and eternal happiness.

**The folly of fools is deceit;** the wit of ungodly men, which, though they account their wisdom, is really their folly, is employed only in finding out ways of overreaching and deceiving others, and themselves too.

Proverbs 14:9

**Fools,** wicked men, as appears from their opposition to the righteous in the next clause,

**make a mock at sin;** please and support themselves with their own and other men's sins, which is a high offence and provocation to God and men. Or, as others render it, *excuse or cover sin* ; sin against God or men, and then justify or extenuate their sins, which is to double the injury. Possibly this clause may be thus rendered, *Sin deludes or makes a mock of fools* , or sinners, i.e. exposeth them to shame and contempt, which is fitly opposed to *favour* in the next clause. And thus two ancient and learned interpreters, Aquila and Theodotion, render it. And this suits exactly with the Hebrew words, whereas in the other translation the noun and verb governed by it are of diverse numbers, which, though sometimes it be allowed, yet is not to be supposed without necessity. But this I submit to the learned and judicious.

**Among the righteous,** who are so far from making a mock of sin, or excusing it, that they do not allow themselves to commit it,

**there is favour;** they find favour both with God and men, as this very word thus generally expressed is used, Pro\_11:27, because they make conscience of ordering their lives so that they offend neither God nor men; or if they offend either, they heartily repent of it; so far are they from excusing it, or pleasing themselves with it. Or, there is *good will* , as the word properly and usually is taken; they have a real love, and are ready to do all offices of

kindness one to another, and therefore neither sin against others, nor rejoice in the sins of others.

Proverbs 14:10

The sense of the verse is this, The inward griefs and joys of men's hearts, though sometimes they may be guessed at by outward signs, yet are not certainly known to any but a man's self. Compare 1Co\_2:11. The scope of the parable may be to keep men from murmuring under their own troubles, or envying other men's happiness.

**A stranger**, any other person without or besides a man's self, doth not intermeddle with his joy; doth not partake of it, nor understand it.

Proverbs 14:11

**The house**; their dwelling and family.

**The tabernacle**; which is a weak, and poor, and unstable thing, soon reared up, and soon taken down, and is here opposed to the large, and strong, and magnificent house of wicked men.

Proverbs 14:12

There are some evil actions or courses which men may think to be lawful and good, either through gross and affected ignorance, or through partiality or self-flattery, or through want of necessary diligence in examining them by the rule of God's will or word; all which are culpable causes of the mistake, and therefore do not excuse the error: but the event showeth that they were sinful and destructive.

Proverbs 14:13

The outward signs of joy are commonly mixed with or end in real and hearty sorrow. The design of the proverb is to declare the vanity of all worldly joys and comforts, and to teach men moderation in them, and to persuade us to seek for more solid and durable joys.

Proverbs 14:14

**The backslider in heart**; he who departeth from God and from the way of his precepts with all his heart, which implies the doing it upon deliberation, with free choice, and full purpose, and customary practice, as ungodly men commonly do, and is opposed

to the slips of human frailty; for otherwise every sin is a revolt from God.

**With his own ways;** with the fruit of his ways or doings, the punishment of his sins.

**From himself,** i.e. from his ways, as appears by the opposition; from the pious temper of his own heart, which cleaveth to the Lord, when the hearts of sinners forsake him; and from the holy and righteous course of his life, from which he shall receive unspeakable comfort and satisfaction both here and hereafter to all eternity.

Proverbs 14:15

**The simple,** either the harmless man, or rather a foolish man, because he is opposed to the prudent, *believeth every word* ; is easily deceived with the smooth words and fair pretences of false and deceitful men.

**To his going;** either,

1. To his own going, as this is generally understood; he ordereth his conversation and dealings in the world with due circumspection, not considering so much what other men say as what he ought to do. Or,

2. To the going of the deceiver, whose the word in the former clause is supposed to be. So the sense is, He judgeth of men's words and professions by their conversation; which is a good rule,

Proverbs 14:16

**Feareth;** trembleth at God's judgments, when they are either inflicted or threatened.

**From evil;** from sin, which is the procuring cause of all calamities.

**Rageth;** fretteth against God, or is enraged against his messengers who bring the threatening, or disquieteth himself in vain or, *transgresseth* , as this verb in its simple form and first conjugation commonly signifies; or, *goeth on in sin constantly* and resolutely, according to the emphasis which this conjugation commonly adds to the simple verb. And this is most fitly opposed to

**departing from evil;** as being



**confident** is opposed to *fearing* . Is *confident* ; secure and insensible of his danger till God's judgments overtake him.

Proverbs 14:17

**Dealeth foolishly;** his passion hurries him into many rash and foolish speeches and actions.

**A man of wicked devices,** one who suppresseth his passion, but designeth and meditateth revenge, watching for the fittest methods and opportunities of executing it,

**is hated,** both by God and men, as being most deeply malicious, and like the devil, and most dangerous and pernicious to human society; whereas men that are soon angry give a man warning, and are quickly pacified, and therefore pitied and pardoned.

Proverbs 14:18

**Inherit folly;** they possess it as their inheritance or portion, holding it fast, improving it, delighting and glorying in it. In like manner David took God's

**testimonies** for his heritage, Psa\_119:111, where the word is the same; withal he may imply that folly is natural and hereditary to them.

**Are crowned with knowledge;** they place their honour and happiness in a sound, and practical, and saving knowledge of God, and of their own duty, and therefore earnestly pursue after it, and heartily embrace it.

Proverbs 14:19

**Bow before the good;** giving honour to them, and supplicating their favour and help, either for supply of their wants, as being brought low for their sins, or for counsel or comfort, or for their prayers to God for them.

**At the gates;** as clients, and petitioners, and beggars use to wait at the doors and houses of great and potent men. The sense is, Good men shall have the pre-eminency over the wicked, oftentimes in this life, when God sees it expedient, but assuredly in the next life.

Proverbs 14:20

**Is hated,** i.e. despised and abandoned, as hateful persons and things are.

**His own neighbour;** strictly so called, who is nearest to him, either by habitation or by relation, and therefore most obliged to love and help him.

Proverbs 14:21

**That despiseth his neighbour;** that doth not pity and relieve the poor, as this is explained in the next clause; the word *neighbour* being here generally taken for any man, as it is most commonly used in Scripture; which not relieving him proceeds from a contempt of his person.

**Sinneth;** and therefore shall be punished for his inhumanity, which is opposed to his being happy in the next clause.

**That hath mercy;** that showeth his compassion by his bounty and relief.

**Happy is he;** he doth a worthy action, and shall be blessed in his deed.

Proverbs 14:22

**Do they not err?** they do certainly err from the right way, and mistake their mark, and shall miss of that advantage and felicity which they promise to themselves by such practices.

**That devise;** that do not only commit it, but make it their design, and study, and business; that are artists or masters in it, as the word signifies.

**Evil;** either,

1. Mischief to men. Or,

2. Any kind of wickedness against God or men; for the expression is general; and this seems best to agree to the following clause.

**Mercy and truth;** either,

1. From men; men shall deal truly and kindly with them, partly because such men by their carriage obliged them to do so, and partly because God inclineth their hearts to it. Or,

2. From God, to whom these two properties are jointly ascribed in divers places of Scripture.

**That devise good;** that designedly and industriously apply themselves to the doing of all good offices to God and men.

Proverbs 14:23

Diligent labour is the ready way to riches, but idle talking, wherein too many spend most of their precious time, will bring a man to poverty.

Proverbs 14:24

**The crown of the wise is their riches;** they are a singular advantage and ornament to them, partly as they make their wisdom more regarded, when the poor man's wisdom is despised, Ecc\_9:16; and partly as they give a man great opportunity to discover and exercise his wisdom or virtue by laying out his riches to the honour and service of God, and to the great and manifold good of the world; which also highly tends to his own glory and happiness.

**But the foolishness of fools is folly;** but as for rich fools, for to them the general word is to be restrained from the opposite clause, their folly is not cured, but made worse and more manifest by their riches. Their riches find them fools, and leave them fools; they are not a crown, but a reproach to them, and an occasion of their greater contempt. For the phrase, we have the like in the Hebrew text, 1Sa\_1:21. *The child Samuel was a child* . It is an elegant figure called *antanaclasis* , used in all authors.

Proverbs 14:25

**Delivereth souls,** i.e. persons, to wit, such as are innocent, from the mischief of false accusations, by declaring the truth, which is sufficient for their vindication. *Speaketh lies* , to the injury and destruction of the innocent; which is easily understood out of the former clause, and from the practice of false witnesses.

Proverbs 14:26

**Strong confidence;** a sure ground of confidence; or a strong refuge, as the next clause explains it.

**His children;** either,

1. God's children. Or,
2. The children of them that fear God, who are sufficiently understood out of the former clause.

Proverbs 14:27

To preserve men from deadly and destructive courses.

Proverbs 14:28

**Is the king's honour**, because it is an evidence of his wise and good government. Under *honour* he here comprehends also strength and safety, (as appears from the opposite clause,) which depend much upon a prince's reputation. And *honour* may be here put for strength, as strength is put for honour or glory, Psa\_8:29:1 96:7.

Proverbs 14:29

**Is of great understanding**; showeth great and true wisdom in conquering his sinful and shameful passions.

**Exalteth**, Heb. *lifteth up* , like a banner; makes it known and visible to all men.

Proverbs 14:30

**A sound heart**; free from envy and such-like inordinate passions, which are commonly called the diseases of the soul, not only in sacred, but even in heathen writers. Or, as others render it, *a healing heart* ; mild, and merciful, and kind to others, which is opposed to envy.

**Is the life of the flesh**; procureth and maintaineth the health and rigour of the whole body. But envy the rottenness of the bones; it wasteth the spirits, and consumeth even the strongest and most inward parts of the body.

Proverbs 14:31

**He that oppresseth the poor**; that useth him hardly, as the Syriac renders it; that withholdeth from him that which is his due, either by the rules of strict justice, or by the great law of charity, of which see Pro\_3:27, and so it is opposed to having mercy in the next clause.

**Reproacheth his Maker**; whose image the poor man bears, which might challenge respect, Job\_31:15; by whose counsel and providence he is made poor, 1Sa\_2:7 Pro\_22:2, and who hath declared himself to be their protector and avenger.

**He that honoureth him**, his image, and works, and laws,

**hath mercy on the poor**; doth not only forbear oppressing or injuring of him, but affords him his pity and help.

Proverbs 14:32

**Driven away**, to wit, in his death, as is gathered from the opposite clause; driven away from God's favour and presence, and from the society of the just, and from all his hopes of happiness, both in this life and in the next. This expression notes that this is done suddenly, violently, and irresistibly, as the smoke or chaff are driven away by a strong wind.

**In his wickedness**, or, for his wickedness, Heb. *in his evil* , which may be understood of the evil of punishment; in the day of his calamity, when he shall flee to God for help.

**Hath hope** of deliverance from it, or of great and everlasting advantage by it.

**In his death**; in his greatest dangers and distresses, yea, even in death itself, which therefore he can receive with comfort and confidence.

Proverbs 14:33

**Resteth**; is laid up and hid there, and not vainly nor rashly uttered by him, but only upon necessary or fit occasions.

**In the midst**, i.e. in the heart, which is expressed by this very word, Psa\_64:6, and elsewhere. That folly which is there instead of wisdom; or, that small degree of wisdom or knowledge which they have.

**Is made known**; they will publish it in all times and companies, without any consideration or discretion.

Proverbs 14:34

**Exalteth a nation**; maketh it honourable in the eyes of God, and of all other nations, as it did the ancient Romans.

**A reproach to any people**; brings contempt and ruin upon them by provoking both God and men against them.

Proverbs 14:35

Both to himself, by his foolish management of the king's affairs committed to him; and to the king, who made so foolish a choice of a servant.

## **Proverbs 15:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 15

**A soft**, mild or gentle, answer, which may imply a foregoing charge or accusation, although the word is and may be rendered *speech or discourse*, turneth away wrath from the speaker.

**Grievous words**, fierce and vexatious replies or speeches, stir up anger; kindle it, and cause it to flame forth.

Proverbs 15:2

**Useth knowledge aright**; expressing what he knows prudently and gracefully; taking due care both what, and when, and to whom, and in what manner he speaks.

**Poureth out**, plentifully, continually, promiscuously, and vehemently, as a fountain doth waters, as this word signifies.

Proverbs 15:3

**The eyes of the Lord**; his knowledge and providence.

**The evil**; who are first mentioned, because they either doubt of or deny God's providence.

Proverbs 15:4

**A wholesome tongue**, which uttereth sound, and comfortable, and useful counsels, is a tree of life; is greatly useful to preserve the present life, and to promote the spiritual and eternal life, both of the speaker and hearers.

**Perverseness therein**, all sorts of false or corrupt speeches,

**is a breach in the spirit**; disturbs and wounds, and oftentimes corrupts and destroys, the spirits or souls, both of the speaker and hearers.

Proverbs 15:5

**A fool despiseth**, doth not regard nor obey, which is an evidence of contempt,

**his father's instruction**; who hath both love to him, and authority over him; which greatly aggravates his folly.

**Reproof**; the reproof of any person whatsoever, and much more of a father.

Proverbs 15:6

**House**, or *family* ; whereby he implies that it is not only enjoyed by him, but also left to his posterity.

**In the revenues of the wicked is trouble:** though he may obtain great revenues, yet they are attended with much trouble and vexation; either because they are strangely blasted and taken from them, or because they are imbittered to them by their own insatiable desires, or tormenting cares and fears, or the horrors of their guilty consciences, or by divers other ways.

Proverbs 15:7

**Disperse knowledge;** freely communicate to others what they know, as they have opportunity.

**Doeth not so;** either because he hath no knowledge to disperse, or because he hath not a heart to perform his duty, or to do good to others. Or, as others render it, and as the last Hebrew word is rendered, Gen\_42:34, and elsewhere, is *not right* ; or the place may be rendered, *the heart of the foolish* (understand out of the former clause, as is very usual, *disperseth by his lips* ) that which is not right; foolish and corrupt discourse, which is fitly opposed to knowledge.

Proverbs 15:8

**The sacrifice;** all the religious services, yea, the best and most costly of them; one kind being put for all the rest.

**The prayer;** the cheapest and meanest services.

Proverbs 15:9

**The way;** the conversation or course of life. This verse seems to contain a reason of the foregoing. God hates wicked men's religious performances, because they are accompanied with ungodly lives, and they pull down with one hand what they build up with another.

**That followeth after righteousness;** that earnestly desires, and constantly and diligently endeavours, to be holy and righteous in the course of his life, although he doth not attain to that perfect righteousness which he thirsts after.

Proverbs 15:10

**Correction is grievous;** he hateth reproof, because it is a reproach to him, and because it strikes at that sin which he loveth.

**The way;** God's way, emphatically called the way here, as also Psa\_119:1 **139:24** Pro\_2:13.

**Shall die,** i.e. be destroyed, both here and, for ever; which is a more grievous thing than a harsh reproof.

Proverbs 15:11

**Destruction;** put for the place of destruction, by a usual metonymy; the place and state of the damned, of which men know nothing but by Divine revelation.

**The hearts;** whose thoughts and affections, though they lie deep, discover themselves by outward signs and actions.

Proverbs 15:12

**Loveth not,** i.e. hateth and avoideth it; for more is here understood than is expressed, as it is Pro\_11:21 **12:3**, and elsewhere.

**Neither will he go unto,** seek their company and conversation, as his duty and interest obligeth him, the wise, i.e. the godly, because he knows they who are so indeed will make conscience of reproving him.

Proverbs 15:13

**The spirit;** either,

1. His vital spirits. Or rather,
2. His courage and rigour, the decay whereof showeth itself in his countenance, as is implied from the former clause.

Proverbs 15:14

Their hearts are set upon wickedness, which is meat and drink to them.

Proverbs 15:15

**Of the afflicted;** of the troubled in mind or heart, as this general expression may very fitly be restrained from the following clause.

**Are evil;** tedious and uncomfortable; he takes no content in any time or thing.



**Of a merry heart**, Heb. *of a good heart* , i.e. composed, and quiet, and contented.

**Hath a continual feast**; hath constant satisfaction and delight in all conditions, yea, even in affliction.

Proverbs 15:16

**The fear of the Lord**, which gives a man tranquillity and comfort in what he hath.

**Trouble**; tumultuous lusts and passions, vexatious cares and fears, horrors of conscience, and expectation of God's curse and judgment, which riches gotten without God's fear do commonly produce.

Proverbs 15:17

**Love**; true friendship and kindness between those that eat together.

Proverbs 15:18

**Stirreth up strife**, because he is very apt both to give and to take all occasions of contention.

Proverbs 15:19

**The way of the slothful man**, the way in which he doth or ought to walk, any good work which he pretends or desires to undertake,

**is as an hedge of thorns**; as a way hedged up with thorns, as it is expressed, Hos\_2:6, troublesome and perplexed, and full, of such difficulties as he despaireth, and therefore never striveth, to overcome.

**The way of the righteous**, who is always diligent in his calling, which is one branch of righteousness, and therefore is fitly opposed to *the slothful* , who is joined with the wicked, Mat\_25:26, and censured as such both in Scripture and heathen authors, because idleness is both in itself a sin, and it leads the way to many other wickednesses.

**Is made plain**; is easy and pleasant to him, notwithstanding all his discouragements and difficulties.

Proverbs 15:20

**Maketh a glad father**, by giving him that honour and obedience which he oweth to him.

**Despiseth his mother;** whereby he maketh her sad. See Poole "Pro\_10:1", where we have the same proverb.

Proverbs 15:21

**Is joy;** he doth not only work wickedness, but taketh pleasure in it.

**Walketh uprightly,** Heb. *directeth* or *maketh straight his going*, i.e. ordereth all his actions by the rule of God's word, and delighteth in so doing, which is understood from the opposite clause.

Proverbs 15:22

**Without counsel,** when men do not seek or will not receive advice from others in weighty affairs,

**purposes are disappointed;** their designs are ill managed, and succeed accordingly.

**In the multitude of counsellors,** i.e. of wise and good counsellors, for such only deserve that name,

**they are established,** i.e. accomplished and brought to a good issue.

Proverbs 15:23

**By the answer,** i.e. by a wise or good and seasonable answer or advice, as is manifest, both from the opposite clause, and from the nature of the thing, because it is manifest and undeniable, that a foolish answer can be no credit nor comfort to the answerer. Thus above, Pro\_15:10, the way is put for God's way; and such synecdoches are frequent in Scripture.

**A word spoken in due season,** counsel or comfort given to another in fit time and manner,

**how good is it!** it is highly acceptable and useful.

Proverbs 15:24

**The way of life is above to the wise;** the way or course which a wise man taketh to preserve and obtain life, is to place his heart, and treasure, and conversation in things above, and to manage all his affairs in this world with due respect and subserviency to the happiness of a better life.

**From hell beneath;** or, *from the lowermost hell* ; not *from the grave* , as this word is elsewhere used, for no wisdom can prevent that; but from hell properly so called, as this word is elsewhere used, as hath been formerly observed.

Proverbs 15:25

**Of the proud;** of the most mighty oppressors, who conceit themselves to be unmovably fixed.

**The border;** either,

1. The estate, *the border* being oft used for the land within the borders, as Psa\_105:31,**33**, and elsewhere. Or,

2. The border by which lands were then bounded and distinguished, which those proud persons endeavoured to remove contrary to God's law, Deu\_19:14 **27:17**.

Proverbs 15:26

**The thoughts of the wicked;** and much more their words, which express their thoughts; for *thoughts are* said to be free, and wicked men are seldom and but little concerned for the sins of their thoughts.

**The words of the pure,** which discover and proceed from their thoughts, Mat\_15:19.

**Pleasant;** acceptable to God, which is opposed to abomination to him.

Proverbs 15:27

**He that is greedy of gain,** that seeketh wealth by unjust courses, as appears from the opposite clause,

**troubleth his own house;** bringeth God's curse and destruction upon himself and his family, whom he designed to enrich and establish.

**That hateth;** who refuseth them not with dissimulation, nor only from prudential reasons, but from a hearty abhorrency of all unrighteousness. *Gifts* , i.e. bribes given to corrupt judgment. See Exo\_18:21 **23:8** Deu\_16:19.

**Shall live;** shall preserve himself and (which is understood out of the former clause) his family from ruin.

Proverbs 15:28

**Studieth to answer;** he answers or speaks considerately and conscientiously, and therefore profitably, or to the use and edification of the hearers.

**The mouth,** not the heart; for he is without heart in Scripture account, and he rashly speaks what comes into his mouth, without the direction of his heart or conscience.

**Evil things;** foolish, and unprofitable, and hurtful speeches.

Proverbs 15:29

**Is far from the wicked,** to wit, when they pray to him, as the next clause explains, and therefore doth not hear nor regard them, as he is said to be

**nigh to the righteous,** Psa\_34:18 **145:18.** But this farness or nearness respecteth not God's essence, which is every where, but his gracious and helpful presence.

Proverbs 15:30

**The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart;** the light which we see with our eyes, and by the help of which we see many other pleasant objects, is a great comfort and refreshment. Compare Ecc\_11:7, *Truly the light is sweet*, and a *pleasant* thing it is *for the eyes to behold the sun*; which is a good comment upon this place.

**A good report;** either,

1. Glad tidings. Or rather,
2. A good name, which is a more lasting thing, and makes deeper impression.

**Maketh the bones fat;** not only cheereth a man for the present, but gives him such solid and stable comfort as doth both revive his soul, and give health and rigour to his body. So he compares two senses together, seeing and hearing, with respect to their several objects, and prefers the latter before the former.

Proverbs 15:31

**The ear that heareth;** the man that hearkeneth to it, and delights in it.

**The reproof of life;** that reproof and good counsel which leads to life.

**Abideth among the wise,** Heb. *shall* or *will abide* , & c. Either,

1. He will thereby be made wise, and be esteemed one of that number. Or rather,

2. He seeketh and delighteth in the company and conversation of the wise, by whom he may be admonished; as, on the contrary, fools, who hate reproof, do avoid and abhor the society of wise men and reprovers, Amo\_5:10.

Proverbs 15:32

**Despiseth his own soul;** which hereby he exposeth to the danger of utter destruction, whereby he shows his folly.

**Getteth understanding;** whereby he saveth his soul. Heb. *possesseth an heart* , which the Hebrews make the seat of wisdom.

Proverbs 15:33

**Is the instruction of wisdom;** doth instruct men in or lead them to true wisdom; whence it is said to be the beginning of wisdom, Pro\_1:7 **9:10**.

**Before honour is humility,** i. e. it is the ready way to honour, both from God and from men. *Humility* ; whereby men submit to God, and yield to men, which gains them love and respect; whereas pride procures them hatred and contempt from God and men.

## **Proverbs 16:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 16

Men can neither think nor speak wisely and well of themselves, or without Divine assistance. Or, as many others, both ancient and modern interpreters, render the verse,

**The preparations,** or *dispositions, or orderings of the heart are in or from a man* ; (i.e. a man may consider and contrive in his own thoughts what he wills or designs to speak; which is spoken by way of concession, yet not excluding man's dependence upon God therein, which is evident both from many plain texts of Scripture, and from undeniable reason;) but the

**answer** or *speech* (as this word is oft used)

**of the tongue is from the Lord.** Men cannot express their own thoughts without God's leave and help, and their tongues are oft overruled by God to speak what was besides and above their own thoughts, as he did Balaam, **Num 23**, and Caiaphas, Joh\_11:49-51.

Proverbs 16:2

**All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes;** many men can easily flatter and deceive themselves into a good opinion of themselves, and of their own actions, though they be sinful. See below, Pro\_16:25, and compare 1Co\_4:4.

**The Lord weigheth,** i.e. exactly knoweth, as men do the things which they weigh and examine, the spirits; the hearts of men, from which both men's actions, and the goodness and badness of them, in a great measure, proceed; their ends and intentions, their dispositions and affections, which are hid not only from others, but oftentimes from a man's self; whereby he is unfit to judge in his own cause, and easily mistaken, if he do not use great diligence and fidelity. In this last clause he intimates the reason why men deceive themselves in judging of their state and actions, because they do not search their own hearts.

Proverbs 16:3

**Commit thy works unto the Lord,** Heb. *Roll* , &c., as a man rolls a burden to another, which is too heavy for himself, imploring his help. Refer all thy actions and concerns to God, and to his glory, as the end of them, and in the discharge of thy own duty depend upon God's providence for assistance and success.

**Thy thoughts shall be established;** thy honest desires and designs shall be brought to a happy issue one way or other.

Proverbs 16:4

**Hath made;** or, *hath wrought* or *doth work* ; for the Hebrews express the present as well as the past thee by this tense: he ordereth or disposeth; for this may be understood either of the works of creation or of providence.

**All things,** and especially all men, for himself; for his own service and glory; for the discovery and illustration of his own wisdom,

power, goodness, truth, justice, and his other most glorious perfections.

**The wicked**, wilful and impenitent sinners,

**for the day of evil**; for the thee of punishment, as this phrase is used, Psa\_49:5 Jer\_17:18, and elsewhere; of which the Scripture frequently speaks, both to warn sinners of their danger, and to satisfy the minds of them which are amazed and disquieted with the consideration of the present impunity and felicity of wicked men. Men make themselves wicked, and God therefore makes them miserable.

Proverbs 16:5

**That is proud in heart**, though he dissemble it in his outward carriage and countenance, as Psa\_10:4. In whose heart pride rules.

**Though hand join in hand**; though they have many friends and assistants. See the same phrase Pro\_11:21.

Proverbs 16:6

**By mercy and truth**; either,

1. By God's mercy or grace, and by his truth in performing his promises made to sinners in Christ. Or,

2. By men's mercy and truth, as those very words are jointly used, Pro\_3:3 **20:28**, and elsewhere; and as, in the following clause, the fear of the Lord is a grace or disposition in men; by a merciful, and just, and faithful frame of heart and course of life; which are here opposed to sacrifices, as mercy is, Hos\_6:6, by which the hypocritical Jews expected to obtain the expiation of their sins.

**Iniquity is purged**, not meritoriously, but instrumentally, as they qualify a man to offer up acceptable prayers to God for the pardon of his sins, and to receive and apply to himself that pardon which Christ by his blood hath purchased for all sincere believers, who are filled with mercy, and truth, and other graces.

**By the fear of the Lord**; by a filial reverence or respect unto God, and by a holy fear of offending God, and by a dread of God's judgments;

**men depart from evil**; they are kept from abusing pardoning mercy, and from returning to folly or wickedness. So he showeth

that justification and sanctification are constant and inseparable companions.

Proverbs 16:7

By disposing their hearts to kindness towards him.

Proverbs 16:8

This was in effect said before, Pro\_15:16, and is here repeated, partly because of the great importance and usefulness of this truth, and partly because men are very hardly brought to a serious belief of it.

Proverbs 16:9

**Deviseth his way;** considers and proposeth to himself what he will do.

**Directeth his steps;** overruleth and disposeth all their designs and actions as he pleaseth, and not as they list.

Proverbs 16:10

**A divine sentence,** Heb. *divination* , which is sometimes taken in a good sense for prudence, as it is Isa\_3:2. A great sagacity and piercing judgment to discern dubious and difficult cases.

**Is;** or, *should be* ; for the verb is wanting in the Hebrew, and this may be supplied as well as *is* . And he seems not so much to speak of the matter of fact, as if it were thus in all kings, which is notoriously and confessedly untrue, as of the duty of kings, in whom wisdom is a necessary qualification. For thus the two following proverbs concerning kings, Pro\_16:12,13, must be understood, otherwise they are repugnant to common experience.

**Of the king;** either,

1. Of wise kings, who only are worthy of that name and office; *king* being here put for a *wise king* , as a *name* is put for a good name, and a woman for a good woman, Ecc\_7:28; and then this is true in fact, as it was in David. 2Sa\_14:17, and in Solomon, 1Ki\_3:28. Or,

2. Of kings in general, in the sense before given; for seeing the word is generally expressed without any limitation, both here and Pro\_16:12,13, it may seem presumption to confine it to those few kings which are or were wise and good.



**Transgresseth not;** or, *shall or should not transgress* , or go beyond the bounds of religion and justice.

Proverbs 16:11

**Are the Lord's;** are God's work, as it follows; made by his direction and appointment, so as no man can corrupt or alter them without violating God's rights and authority, and incurring his displeasure.

**The weights,** Heb. *the stones* , which they then used as weights. See Poole "Pro\_11:1".

Proverbs 16:12

**It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness;** they should not only abstain from all wicked practices, but abhor them both in their own persons, and in all their servants and subjects. It is too plain that he speaks not of the common practice, but of the duty of kings, as on Pro\_16:10. And such affirmative expressions are oft used in Scripture to express men's duty only, as 1Co\_6:19, *your body is* (i.e. should be) *the temple* , &c.; and 1Co\_7:32, *careth* , &c. i.e. ought to care.

**The throne is established by righteousness;** and (which is implied) weakened, and sometimes overthrown by unrighteousness; and therefore this is necessary for their own security and happiness.

Proverbs 16:13

All wise and good kings do, and all kings should, delight in employing such counsellors, judges, and officers under them, as are just and faithful in their counsels, and sentences, and actions, because such bring great honour and advantage to them.

Proverbs 16:14

**Is as messengers of death;** is as terrible as if many messengers were sent to denounce the sentence of death, and to execute it.

**Will pacify it;** will use all prudent and lawful means to pacify it.

Proverbs 16:15

**In the light of the king's countenance is life;** his favour and smiling countenance is most sweet and refreshing, especially to him that was under a sentence of death, Pro\_16:14.

**His favour is as a cloud of the latter rain;** as acceptable as those clouds which bring the latter rain, whereby the fruits are filled and ripened a little before the harvest; of which see Deu\_11:14 Job\_29:23 Jam\_5:7.

Proverbs 16:16

**How much better!** it is inexpressibly and unconceivably better, as this phrase implies, Psa\_31:19 **36:7 92:5**, &c.

**Is it to get wisdom than gold,** because it brings a man more certain, and complete, and lasting comfort and advantage.

Proverbs 16:17

**The highway of the upright,** their common road, in which they constantly purpose, and desire, and customarily use to walk, although sometimes through frailty or temptation they slip into the by-paths of sin, is to depart from evil; from the evil of sin, and consequently from the evil of punishment.

**He that keepeth his way,** that takes heed to walk in that highway, preserveth his soul from that mischief which befalls those that walk in the crooked paths of wickedness.

Proverbs 16:18

**Pride goeth before destruction;** it is commonly a forerunner and cause of men's ruin, because it highly provokes both God and men.

Proverbs 16:19

Who will spoil and rob others to maintain their own pomp and luxury.

Proverbs 16:20

**He that handleth a matter wisely;** he who orders his affairs with discretion. Or, as others, both ancient and later interpreters, take it, *he that understandeth or attendeth to the word* , to wit, the word of God, which is called absolutely *the word* , Pro\_13:13, and elsewhere, making that the rule of his actions.

**Shall find good;** shall obtain happy success.

**Who so trusteth in the Lord;** who doth not trust to his prudence or diligence, but to God's providence and blessings. Or, who mixeth God's word with faith, as the phrase is, Heb\_4:2.

**Happy is he;** he shall not only find some good, but shall certainly attain to true happiness.

Proverbs 16:21

**The wise in heart shall be called prudent:** the sense is either,

1. He who hath wisdom or sound knowledge in his heart, will show it by his prudence in ordering his actions. Or rather,
2. He who is truly wise, or prudent, or intelligent (all which words most commonly signify one and the same thing, both in this and in other books of Scripture) shall be so called or accounted by others.

**The sweetness of the lips;** eloquence added to wisdom; the faculty of expressing a man's mind fitly, and freely, and acceptably.

**Increaseth learning;** both in himself, for whilst a man teacheth others he improveth himself; and especially in others, who by this means are induced to hear and receive his good instructions. Wisdom gets a man repute with others, but this faculty of right speaking makes a wise man more instrumental to do good to others.

Proverbs 16:22

**Is a well-spring of life,** is continually suggesting wholesome and saving instructions,

**unto him that hath it;** and to others also, as is understood from the following clause. The instruction of fools is folly; their most grave and serious counsels are foolish.

Proverbs 16:23

**Teacheth his mouth;** directeth him what, and when, and how to speak, and keepeth him from speaking rashly and foolishly.

**Addeth learning to his lips,** i.e. enableth him to speak learnedly and wisely. Or, *increaseth learning* (in himself and others) by (as this Hebrew particle oft signifies, and is by some rendered here) *his lips*, i.e. by his wise speeches; that this may agree with the latter clause of Pro\_16:21, where this same phrase is used.

Proverbs 16:24

**Pleasant words;** the discourses of the wise last mentioned, Pro\_16:23, which yield both profit and delight; their wholesome counsels and refreshing comforts.

**To the bones;** to the body, synecdochically expressed by the bones, the strongest and greatest parts of it, and the supporters of the rest.

Proverbs 16:25

This whole verse was delivered before, Pro\_14:12, and is here repeated, partly for its great importance and usefulness to prevent that self-deceit which is so common and dangerous; and partly to keep men from leaning too much to their own understanding, and to oblige them to seek and receive the good counsels of wise and holy men.

Proverbs 16:26

**For himself;** for his own use and benefit. The scope of the proverb is to commend and press diligence in a man's calling, and to condemn idleness.

**Craveth it of him,** Heb. *boweth to him* , as a suppliant; beggeth him to labour, that it may have something to put into it for its own comfort, and for the nourishment of the whole body.

Proverbs 16:27

**Diggeth up evil;** inventeth or designeth mischief to others, and prosecuteth his evil designs with great and constant industry.

**In his lips there is as a burning fire;** as his thoughts, so also his words are very vexatious and pernicious; his tongue is set on fire of hell, and sets himself and others on fire by lies and slanders, and other provoking speeches.

Proverbs 16:28

**A froward man;** or, *perverse man* , who perverteth his words and ways; who pleaseth not God, and is contrary to men, as was said of the Jews, 1Th\_2:15.

**Soweth strife,** by whispering such things as may provoke one against another.

**A whisperer**, who secretly carries tales from one to another, publishing those evil words and actions which they should conceal, and detracting from their good actions, and perverting such as are innocent with their false constructions.

**Chief friends**, Heb. *a chief friend* ; the singular number put for the plural, as is frequent in the Hebrew text.

Proverbs 16:29

**A violent man**, Heb. *a man of violence* , i.e. devoted to violent and injurious courses,

**enticeth his neighbour** into a confederacy with him in his wicked practices, as it follows.

**That is not good**, i.e. that is very sinful, as this phrase is used, Pro\_17:26 **18:5**, and oft elsewhere.

Proverbs 16:30

**Shutteth his eyes**, that his thoughts may be more free and intent to contrive mischief.

**Moving his lips**; which is the gesture, either,

1. Of one whose thoughts are deeply engaged. Or,
2. Of one that speaketh or maketh signs to others to assist him in executing that wickedness which he hath contrived.

Proverbs 16:31

**A crown of glory**; a great honour and ornament, as it is a singular blessing of God, a token of great experience and prudence, as it comes nearest to God, who is called

**the Ancient of days**, Dan\_7:9. *If it be found in the way of righteousness* ; if it be accompanied with true piety, otherwise *an old sinner is accursed* , Isa\_65:20. Heb. *it shall be found* , &c. This is a privilege promised to righteous persons, Exo\_20:12 Pro\_3:16 **4:22**; whereas ungodly men *shall not live out half their days* , Psa\_55:23.

Proverbs 16:32

**He that is slow to anger**, not apt to revenge, but ready to forgive injuries,

**is better than the mighty**, because he is more like to God, more wise to foresee and to prevent mischief, both to himself and others, which oft cometh from rash anger, of a more gallant and generous spirit, and more valiant and victorious, as it follows. This is opposed to the perverse judgment of the world, who esteem such persons pusillanimous and cowardly.

**That ruleth his spirit**; that subdueth his passions; for his victory is the more glorious, because he fights with the stronger enemy; he conquers by his own, and not by other men's hands, and he gets a greater glory and advantage to himself, and that without the injury and ruin of others, wherewith the conquests of cities are commonly attended.

Proverbs 16:33

**The lot is cast into the lap**; as the ancient practice was in dividing inheritances, and deciding doubtful things, of which see Num\_26:55 Jos\_7:16 1Sa\_10:20,21 **14:41,42 Pr 1:14** Act\_1:26.

**The whole disposing thereof is of the Lord**; the event, though casual to men, is directed and determined by God's counsel and providence.

## **Proverbs 17:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 17

*Of sacrifices* ; of the remainders of sacrifices, of which they used to make feasts; of which **See Poole** "Pro\_7:14". Or, *of slain* beasts, as that word is used, Gen\_31:54, and elsewhere.

Proverbs 17:2

**Shall have rule over a son that causeth shame**; either as being by his father appointed tutor or guardian to his son; or being by his wisdom advanced to that estate and dignity which the other possibly hath lost by his folly.

**Shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren**; partly as a just recompence for his faithful service, as Gen\_15:2,3, &c., and partly as an obligation to him to take care of his children.

Proverbs 17:3

The hearts of men cannot be searched and known by any human art, but by God only.

Proverbs 17:4

**A wicked doer**, or, a malicious or mischievous man, whose practice and delight it is to bring trouble to others,

**giveth heed to false lips**, Heb. *to lips of iniquity* , to any wicked counsels or speeches, to false accusations and calumnies, which give him occasion and encouragement to do mischief.

**A liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue**; he who accustometh himself to false and wicked speaking delighteth in the like speeches of other men. This proverb contains a comparison between an evil-doer and an evil-speaker, and showeth their agreement in the same sinful practice of being greedy to hear false and wicked speeches.

Proverbs 17:5

**Mocketh the poor**; derideth or reproacheth him with or for his poverty.

**His Maker**; God, who by his providence made him poor. See the same assertion Pro\_14:31.

**At calamities**; at the miseries of other men.

Proverbs 17:6

**The crown of old men**; their honour and happiness, because they are in themselves blessings of God, and testimonies of God's favour, although sometimes they may become the shame of their father's house.

**Their fathers**; namely, such fathers as are wise and godly, as is evident from the nature of the thing, for wicked parents bring infamy upon their children.

Proverbs 17:7

**Excellent speech**; either,

1. Discourse of high and excellent things far above his capacity.  
Or,
2. Lofty or eloquent speech, which fools oft affect, Or,
3. Virtuous and godly discourse.

**A fool;** either properly so called; or, as this word is most commonly used in this book, a wicked man, whose actions give the lie to his expressions.

Proverbs 17:8

**As a precious stone;** pleasant and acceptable, and withal dazzleth his eyes.

**Of him that hath it,** Heb. *of the lord or owner of it* ; either,

1. Of the giver; or rather,
2. Of the receiver of it, who by the giver is made lord of it; for to his eyes it was exposed, that he might discern the beauty and worth of it, and thereby be allured to do what was desired, which accordingly he did, as it here follows.

**Whithersoever it turneth;** to whomsoever it is presented. But this, as also many other proverbs, are to be understood of the common course or effect with most men, but not universally of all men.

Proverbs 17:9

**That covereth a transgression;** that concealeth, as far as he may, other men's faults against himself, or against their friends.

**Seeketh,** i.e. findeth or obtaineth, as this word is used here below, Pro\_17:19 **11:27**.

**Love;** either

1. To himself. Or rather,
2. To the transgressor or offending friend; he maintains love among friends, as it may be explained from the opposite clause.

**That repeateth;** that publisheth and spreadeth it abroad; that recalls it to mind after it was past and forgotten.

**A matter;** or, *the matter* last mentioned, to wit, the transgression.

**Separateth very friends;** either,

1. He alienateth his friend from himself. Or rather,
2. He raiseth jealousies and dissensions among friends. This phrase we had before, Pro\_16:28.



Proverbs 17:10

Is more effectual for his reformation.

Proverbs 17:11

**An evil man seeketh only rebellion;** it is the constant study and business of wicked men to rebel, either,

1. Against men in authority. But this is not universally true, for many most wicked persons are not guilty of that sin. Or rather,

2. Against God. For,

1. Thus it is true of all wicked men.

2. This word is used of rebellion against God, Deu\_31:27 Eze\_2:5,6 3:9, &c.

3. This word being put alone, without any addition of the object, seems most probably to be meant of the highest and worst kind of rebellion, according to the common rule of interpretation in such cases. *A cruel messenger* ; or, *a cruel angel* ; the angel of death, the devil, or some bloody men employed by God to avenge his quarrel; or some dreadful punishment; it being very usual in Scripture to represent things under the notion of persons, as **Ro 8**, and elsewhere.

Proverbs 17:12

**Robbed of her whelps,** when she is most cruel and fierce.

**In his folly;** in the heat of his lust or passion, because the danger is greater, all things considered, and more unavoidable.

Proverbs 17:13

From his person and family, because such a man is most hateful to God and to all mankind; God will punish him, and men will not pity nor relieve him.

Proverbs 17:14

**Leteth out water,** by cutting the bank of a river, in which case the water quickly widens the breach, and breaks in with irresistible violence and fury, and causeth great mischief and destruction.

**Leave off contention, before it be meddled with;** avoid the occasions and prevent the beginnings of contention.

Proverbs 17:15

**That justifieth;** that acquitteth him as innocent by a judicial sentence, or otherwise approveth or commendeth his evil practices; by which we may easily understand what it is to condemn the just.

Proverbs 17:16

**Wherefore?** the question implies that it is unworthily placed, and that it is to no purpose or benefit of the possessor.

**A price;** possessions or riches, as all the ancient translators render it, of which this word is used, Isa\_55:1, and elsewhere, under which all opportunities and abilities of getting it are comprehended.

**To get wisdom;** for the obtaining whereof rich men have many and great advantages above others.

**No heart to it;** neither common discretion to discern the worth of wisdom, and his advantage to get it; nor any sincere desire to get it; for the heart is commonly used in Scripture both for the understanding, and for the will and affections.

Proverbs 17:17

**A friend,** a sincere and hearty friend, loveth at all times, not only in prosperity, but also in adversity, when false friends forsake us.

**A brother,** who is so not only by name and blood, but by brotherly affection,

**is born for adversity;** was sent into the world for this among other ends, that he might comfort and relieve his brother in his adversity. So this proverb compareth a friend with a brother, and showeth that a friend doth that freely, and by choice, which a brother doth by the force and obligations of nature. But this last clause may be, and is by divers, otherwise rendered, and he (to wit, the friend) *is born a brother* (or, *becomes or is made a brother* , i.e. puts on brotherly affection, as if he had received a second birth, and was born his brother; such expressions being not unusual, both in Scripture and in other authors) in or against the time of adversity. So the sense is, He is a friend at all times, but in adversity he is more than all ordinary friend, even a brother.

Proverbs 17:18

**Striketh hands**, in token of his becoming surety; of which phrase, and of the thing itself, see on Pro\_6:1 **11:15**. His friend: the friend here is either,

1. Before and to the creditor. Or rather,

2. Before, and with, and for the debtor, for whom, as being his friend, he becomes surety, as the manner of friends is. See on Pro\_6:3. And this proverb is fitly placed after that, Pro\_17:17, to intimate, that although the laws of friendship oblige us to love and help our friends in trouble as far as we are able, yet they do not oblige us to become surety for them rashly, and above what we are able to pay, for by that means we make ourselves unable to do good either to them, or to others, or to ourselves.

Proverbs 17:19

**He loveth transgression that loveth strife**, because contention is in itself a sin, and is commonly accompanied or followed with many sins, as detraction, malice, hatred, pride, &c.

**His gate**; either,

1. His mouth, i.e. who speaketh loftily; for we read of *the gate* or *doors* of one's mouth in Mic\_7:5. and elsewhere; but then the word *mouth* or *tongue* is added to determine the sense: but the mouth is no where called the gate, simply or absolutely. Or,

2. The gate of his house that maketh it, and consequently his house, lofty and magnificent, beyond what befits his quality, which being an evidence and effect of pride and haughtiness of spirit, is here mentioned for all the rest. So the sense is, He who carries himself loftily and scornfully.

**Seeketh destruction**; he seeks those things which will expose him to destruction, because he maketh himself odious both to God and men. Or, findeth destruction; seeking being put for finding or procuring, as above, Pro\_17:9.

Proverbs 17:20

**He that hath a froward heart**, whose heart is not plain and upright, but false towards God or men,

**findeth no good;** shall not get that advantage by his dissimulation which he intends and expects, but shall fall into mischief, as is implied from the opposite clause.

**He that hath a perverse tongue;** that speaks deceitfully or wickedly. So here is a comparison between an evil heart and an evil tongue, and, the ill effects of both of them.

Proverbs 17:21

**A fool;** not a natural, but a wilful fool, or a wicked son.

**The father;** and consequently the mother also.

**Hath no joy,** which parents usually have in the birth of a child, and especially of a son; but hath great cause of sorrow, the contrary being implied in this and such-like expressions, as in Scripture, as Pro\_10:2, &c., so also in profane authors; whose words see in my Latin Synopsis.

Proverbs 17:22

**A merry heart;** cheerfulness of soul, especially that which is solid, and ariseth from the witness of a good conscience.

**Doeth good,** even to the body; it contributes very much to the restoration or preservation of bodily health and rigour, as physicians observe, and experience showeth.

**Broken;** sad and dejected.

**Drieth the bones;** wasteth the marrow of the bones, and the moisture and strength of the body.

Proverbs 17:23

**A wicked man,** whether judge or witness.

**Out of the bosom;** in secret, as this phrase is expounded, Pro\_21:14, being privily conveyed from the bosom of the giver into his own bosom.

**To pervert the ways of judgment;** to give or procure an unjust sentence.

Proverbs 17:24

**Before him;** or, *in* (as the particle *beth* is used, Deu\_2:7, and is here rendered by divers interpreters) the face or countenance. The sense is either,

1. His wisdom appears even in his gestures and looks, which are modest, and composed, and grave. Or,

2. Wisdom is before him, or in his sight, as the mark at which he aims, or as the rule by which he constantly walketh and ordereth all his steps, from time to time minding his present duty and business. The steps of a fool are in the ends of the earth: the sense of this clause also is either,

1. His folly appears in his light, and unsteady, and disorderly carriage and looks. Or,

2. His mind is wavering and unsettled; he neither proposeth a right and certain end to himself, nor is he constant in the use of fit means to attain it; he neglects his present business and true interest, and wanders hither and thither in the pursuit of earthly vanities, minding most those things which are remotest from him, and least concern him.

Proverbs 17:25

This he said before, Pro\_15:20, and elsewhere; but he here repeats it as a point of great moment and constant use, and as a powerful motive to oblige both children to carry themselves wisely and dutifully to their parents, as they would not be thought to be unnatural or inhuman, and parents to educate their children prudently and religiously, at least for their own comfort, if not for the public good.

Proverbs 17:26

**Also:** this particle seems to have relation to the next foregoing proverb, to imply that it is a very evil thing for children to cause grief to their parents, as it is also to do what here follows.

**To punish the just;** for parents, or princes, or rulers, to whom alone this power belongs, to punish innocent and good men;

**is not good;** is highly evil and abominable, as is implied. See above, Pro\_17:20 **16:29 17:10**, &c.

**Nor to strike princes for equity;** nor to smite magistrates, either with the hand or tongue, for the execution of justice, as condemned persons are apt to do. Or, as some learned interpreters render it, *nor for princes to strike* any man for equity, or for doing his duty, or what is just. So this clause best agrees with the

former. Besides, it belongs to princes or ms, strafes to punish or strike.

Proverbs 17:27

**Spareth**, Heb. *restraineth* , as at other times, so especially when he is provoked to passion, in which case fools utter all their mind. An excellent spirit; which he showeth by commanding his passions, and bridling himself from hasty and unadvised speeches. Or, as others render it, is of a cool spirit, calm and moderate, not easily provoked; humble, as the Chaldee renders it; *patient* or *long-suffering* , as the LXX. and Arabic interpreters render the words. Or, as others, *sparing* (Heb. *precious* , which is put for rare or scarce, 1Sa\_3:1 Pro\_25:17 Isa\_13:12) *of his breath* , i.e. of his speech, as this very word is used, Pro\_29:11 Isa\_11:4, compared with 2Th\_2:8.

Proverbs 17:28

**Is counted wise**, because he is sensible of his own folly, and therefore forbears to speak, lest he should discover it; which is a great point of true wisdom.

## **Proverbs 18:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 18

According to this interpretation the sense is,

**Through desire** (of it, to wit of wisdom, which is easily understood out of the end of the verse; such ellipses being frequent in Scripture)

**a man, having separated himself**, ( being sequestered from the company, and noise, and business of the world, betaking himself to retirement and solitude, as men do that apply themselves to any serious study.)

**seeketh** and

**intermeddleth with all wisdom**, i.e. useth all diligence, that he may search and find out all solid knowledge and true wisdom. And this earnest desire and endeavour to get true wisdom within a man's self is fitly opposed to the fool's contempt of wisdom, or to his desire of it, not for use and benefit, but only for vain ostentation, which is expressed in the next verse, although coherence is little regarded by interpreters in the several verses

and proverbs of this book. But this verse is otherwise rendered in the margin of our English Bible, and by divers others, *He that separateth himself*, (either,

1. From his friend; or rather,

2. From other men; who affects singularity, is wedded to his own opinion, and through self-conceit despiseth the opinions and conversation of others,) seeketh according to his desire, (seeketh to gratify his own inclinations and affections, and chooseth those opinions which most comply with them,) and *intermeddleth* (for this word is used in a bad sense, Pro\_17:14 **20:3**, and it is not found elsewhere, save in this place) in every business, as proud and singular persons are commonly pragmatical, delighting to find faults in others, that they may get some reputation to themselves by it. Heb. *in every thing that is* ; thrusting themselves into the actions and affairs of other men. Or, as this last clause is and may be rendered, and *contendeth* (Heb. *mingleth himself* ; for words of that signification are commonly used for *contending* or *fighting* , as Deu\_2:5,**9,19** Isa **36:8** Dan\_11:10) *with* or *against* (for the Hebrew prefix *beth* oft signifies *against* ) *all reason or wisdom* ; whatsoever any man speaketh against his opinion and desire, though it be never so reasonable and evident, he rejecteth it, and obstinately maintains his own opinion.

Proverbs 18:2

**In understanding**; in getting sound and saving knowledge, either by his own study, or by the instructions of wise and good men.

**But that his heart may discover itself.** Heb. *but* (his delight is) *in the discovery of his own heart* , i.e. in uttering that folly and wickedness which is in his heart; being more forward to speak than to hear, which is one badge of a fool.

Proverbs 18:3

**When the wicked cometh** into any place or company,

**then cometh also contempt**; either,

1. Passively; he is justly contemned and reproached by those who converse with him. Or rather,

2. Actively; he despiseth and scorneth all instruction and reproof, neither fearing God nor reverencing man; for he seems here to note his sin rather than his punishment.

**And with ignominy reproach;** and he doth not only contemn others in his heart, but showeth his contempt of them by ignominious and reproachful expressions and carriages.

Proverbs 18:4

**A man's,** i.e. a wise man's, as the next clause explains this; who is worthy of the name and hath the understanding of a man in him. This Hebrew word oftentimes notes an eminent or excellent person, and therefore is opposed to Adam, which designs any ordinary man.

**As deep waters;** full of deep wisdom.

**The well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook;** that wisdom which is in his heart is continually pouring forth wise and good counsels.

Proverbs 18:5

**It is not good,** i.e. it is a most wicked and hateful thing. **See Poole** "Pro\_17:15,26.

**To accept the person;** to favour his unrighteous cause.

Proverbs 18:6

**A fool's lips enter into contention;** a fool by his rash and wicked speeches provoketh others to quarrel with him, and, as it follows, to strike him.

**His mouth calleth for strokes;** procureth strokes to himself.

Proverbs 18:7

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 18:8

**The words of a tale-bearer,** who privily slandereth his neighbour,

**are as wounds;** deeply wound the reputation, and afterwards the heart, of the slandered person. Compare Pro\_12:18. Or, as others render the word, are



**as smooth or flattering**, i.e. they really are so; the particle as being oft used to express the truth of the thing, as hath been noted before. See also Joh\_1:14. They are softer than oil, as is said, Psa\_55:21. For slanderers use to cover and usher in their calumnies with pretences or kindness and compassion to them whom they traduce.

**They go down into the innermost parts of the belly;** they wound mortally, piercing to the heart, which is oft meant by the belly; as Job\_15:35 **32:19**, &c.

Proverbs 18:9

They are alike; though they take several paths, yet both come to one end, even to extreme want and poverty.

Proverbs 18:10

**The name of the Lord**, i.e. the Lord, as he hath revealed himself in his works, and especially in his word by his promises, and the declarations of his infinite perfections, and of his good will to his people.

**Is a strong tower;** is sufficient for our protection in case of the greatest dangers.

**The righteous;** which limitation he adds to beat down the vain confidences of those men, who though they live in a gross neglect and contempt of God, will expect salvation from him.

Proverbs 18:11

He trusts to his wealth, as that which will either enable him to resist his enemy, or at least purchase his favour.

Proverbs 18:12

**Before destruction the heart of man is haughty;** pride is a cause and presage of ruin, as is noted, Pro\_16:18. *Is* ; or, *goeth* . This clause we had Pro\_15:33.

Proverbs 18:13

**Before he heareth it;** before he hath fully heard and considered what another is speaking about it.

**It is folly and shame;** it is a shameful folly, though he seek the reputation of a wise man by it, as if he could readily and

thoroughly understand all that another hath said before he hath uttered it.

Proverbs 18:14

**The spirit**, i.e. the soul, to wit, which is unwounded, as appears by the opposite branch of the verse; which is vigorous and cheerful, supported by the sense of God's love, and the conscience of its own integrity, and the prospect of its present peace and future happiness.

**Will sustain his infirmity**; will easily support him under any bodily or outward troubles, as God's people have oft found by experience.

**Wounded**; dejected with the sense of its own guilt and misery.

**Who can bear?** it is most grievous and intolerable without Divine assistance.

Proverbs 18:15

**The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge**, by employing his thoughts and studies upon it.

**The ear of the wise getteth knowledge**, by a greedy and diligent attention to those from whom he may learn it.

Proverbs 18:16

**Maketh room for him**; procures him free access to great men. Heb. *enlargeth him*, as this very phrase is rendered, Psa\_4:1, and elsewhere; freeth him from straits and oppressions.

**Bringeth him before great men**; gets him favour and free conversation with them.

Proverbs 18:17

**He that is first in his own cause**, he that first pleadeth his cause, **seemeth just**, both to himself and to the judge or court, by his fair pretences.

**His neighbour cometh**, to contend with him in judgment and to plead his cause,

**and searcheth him**; examineth the truth and weight of his allegations, and disproveth them, and detecteth his weakness. Or,

*discovers him* ; for seeking or searching are oft put for *finding* , as Pro\_17:9,19, and elsewhere.

Proverbs 18:18

**Causeth contentions to cease**, by determining the matters in difference.

**Parteth**; maketh a partition, giveth to every one what is right or meet, by the disposition of Divine Providence.

**Between the mighty**; so it doth also between mean persons, but he mentions the mighty because they are most prone to contention, and most fierce and intractable in it, and most capable of doing great mischief to themselves and others by it, and therefore they most need this remedy.

Proverbs 18:19

**Offended**, to wit, by his brother's unkindness or injury.

**Is harder to be won**; or, *is stronger* , which is sufficiently understood by the mention of a strong city, to which he is compared; such ellipses being frequent in the Hebrew, as hath been noted before.

**Than a strong city**; which is hardly to be conquered.

**Like the bars of a castle**; which are very strong, and not to be broken, and make the castle strong, and hardly to be won. The truth of this assertion is confirmed by the testimony of Aristotle and other learned authors, who affirm the same fixing; and the reason of it is evident, because the nearness of the relation greatly heightens the provocation, and love abused frequently turns to extreme hatred.

Proverbs 18:20

Wise and edifying discourses tend to the comfort and satisfaction of the speaker, as well as to the good of the hearers.

Proverbs 18:21

**Are in the power of the tongue**; are brought upon men by the good or bad use of their tongues.

**That love it**; either,

1. The tongue; that love and use much talking, which is oft censured as a sin, and a cause of mischief. See Pro\_10:19 Jam\_1:19. Or,

2. The use of their tongue in either of those ways, which are plainly supposed in the former clause of the verse: they who do not only speak well, which a wicked man may sometimes do; or speak ill, which a good man may possibly do; but do love, and therefore accustom themselves, to speak well or ill.

**Shall eat the fruit thereof;** shall receive either good or evil, according to the quality of their speeches.

Proverbs 18:22

**A wife;** either,

1. Simply a wife; for a wife, though she be not the best of her kind, is to be esteemed a blessing, being useful both for society of life, Gen\_2:18, and for the mitigation of a man's cares and troubles, and for the prevention of sins. Or,

2. Good wife; one that deserves the name and performs the duty of that relation; a wise and worthy wife, as this word may seem to imply, being deduced from the Hebrew word *isch*, which sometimes notes a man of eminency. And this limitation and explication of the word may be gathered both from the following commendations, which would hardly be given to a bad wife, and from the usage of Scripture, in which this ellipsis is frequent, as a *path* or *way* is put for a *good path* or *way*, Psa\_119:1 Pro\_15:10, *an answer* for a *good answer*, Pro\_15:23, *a king* for a *good king*, Pro\_16:10 **29:4**, a *name* for a *good name*, Pro\_22:1 Ecc\_7:1, &c.

**A good thing;** a singular blessing.

**Obtaineth favour of the Lord;** obtaineth her not by his own wit, or art, or diligence, but by God's good providence towards him, which ordereth that and all other events as it pleaseth him.

Proverbs 18:23

**Useth entreaties;** humbly begs the favour of rich men, as his necessities and occasions require it.

**Answereth roughly;** speaketh proudly and scornfully, either to the poor, or to others that converse with him, being puffed up with a conceit of his riches, and of his self-sufficiency.

Proverbs 18:24

**A man that hath friends,** Heb. *a man of friends* ; either,

1. Who desires the friendship of others. Or,
2. Who professeth friendship to others.

**That sticketh closer** to him that desires and needs his help; who is more hearty in the performance of all friendly offices.

### **Proverbs 19:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 19

**That walketh in his integrity;** who is upright in his words and actions.

**That is perverse in his lips;** that useth to speak wickedly, which proceeds from a wicked heart, and is usually attended with an evil life.

**Is a fool;** is a hypocrite, or a wicked man, for this is opposed to the upright man in the former clause; yea, though he be rich, which is implied from the same clause.

Proverbs 19:2

**The soul;** which is the principal cause and director of all men's actions.

**Without knowledge;** without wisdom or prudence to discern his way, and what and how he ought to act in his several cases and concernments.

**It is not good;** it is very evil and pernicious.

**That hasteth with his feet;** that rashly and headily rusheth into actions without serious consideration. So two vices are here censured, the want of knowledge, and the neglect or disuse of knowledge in a man's actions.

Proverbs 19:3

**Perverteth his way;** either.

1. Enticeth him to sin. Or rather,

2. Crosseth and blasteth his designs and enterprises, and brings losses and miseries upon him. *His heart fretteth against the Lord* ; he ascribes his unhappiness not to his own sin and folly, which is the true cause of it, but to God and his providence, against which he unjustly murmurs.

Proverbs 19:4

Is disowned and forsaken by those who are most obliged to help him.

Proverbs 19:5

**Shall not be unpunished**; though he escape the observation and punishment of men, yet he shall not avoid the judgment of God.

**That speaketh lies**; that accustometh himself to lying, either in judgment or in common conversation.

Proverbs 19:6

**Of the prince**; or, as others, *of the liberal or bountiful man* ; which comes to the same thing, for kings were anciently called benefactors, Luk\_22:25.

**A friend**; not sincerely, as daily experience shows, but in show or profession, or in the outward expressions of it, whereby they may oblige him.

Proverbs 19:7

**Brethren**; his nearest and dearest relations, who are oft called brethren in Scripture, by a common synecdoche.

**Hate him**, i.e. despise and shun him, as men do any thing which they hate, and as the following words explain it.

**His friends**; his former companions, who in his prosperity professed friendship to him.

**He pursueth them with words**, earnestly imploring their pity; or, *he urgeth* (Heb. *pursueth* ) their words, i.e. allegeth their former promises and professions of friendship. Or, without any supplement, *he seeketh words* , as the preacher sought to find out acceptable words, Ecc\_12:10, wherewith he might prevail or move them to pity.

**They are wanting to him**, Heb. *they are not* ; either,

1. His friends are not, to wit, what they pretended to be, friends to him. Or,
2. Their words are vain, and without effect; there is no reality in them.

Proverbs 19:8

**Loveth his own soul**, or *loveth himself*, because he procures great good to his soul, or to himself, as it follows; as sinners, on the contrary, are said to *hate their souls*, Pro\_29:24, because they bring mischief upon them. That keepeth understanding; that observeth and carefully practiseth its precepts, as that phrase is commonly used.

**Shall find good**; shall have great benefit by it, both for his conduct in this life, and for his happiness in the next.

Proverbs 19:9

This was said before, Pro\_19:5, and seems to be here repeated, either for its great use and weight in human society, and to show how much God abhors such practices; or to show the pernicious effects of this sin, and consequently of all other sins, one eminent kind being put for all the rest, and this in opposition to the good effects of wisdom or piety, which he declared in the foregoing verse.

Proverbs 19:10

**Delight**, to live in pleasure, and plenty, and outward glory,

**is not seemly for a fool**; it doth not become him, nor suit with him; partly because prosperity corrupts even wise men, and makes fools mad; and partly because it gives him more opportunity to discover his folly, and to do mischief both to himself and others. He implies that a rod or punishment is fitter for him than pleasure, as is noted, Pro\_10:13 **26:3**.

**A servant**; who is of a servile condition and disposition, not much differing from a fool; who is a servant to his lusts, and wholly unfit to rule other men.

**Over princes**, i.e. over men of better quality than himself; for servants are commonly ignorant, and when they are advanced, they grow insolent, and presumptuous, and intolerable.

Proverbs 19:11

This is opposed to the perverse judgment of worldly men, who account it folly and stupidity not quickly to resent a provocation, and a dishonour and reproach not to revenge it.

Proverbs 19:12

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 19:13

Are like rain continually dropping upon a house, which by degrees marreth the house and household stuff, and driveth the inhabitants out of it. He compareth her to a

**continual dropping**, because of that inseparable union and necessary cohabitation of husband and wife together, notwithstanding such contentions.

Proverbs 19:14

Is vouchsafed to a man by the singular providence of God, who is the only searcher and ruler of hearts, exactly discerning who are prudent or pious, in which even wise men's judgments are commonly mistaken, and inclining the minds and hearts of persons one towards another.

Proverbs 19:15

**Casteth into a deep sleep**; maketh a man careless and, negligent, and like one asleep in his business, whereby he cometh to want, as it follows.

Proverbs 19:16

**The commandment**; the commands of God, called by way of eminence the commandment, as the word is oft used emphatically for the word of God, as hath been noted before. fore. His ways; either,

1. His own ways, by not taking heed to his ways, so as to order his conversation aright. Or,
2. The ways of God, who is understood in the former clause.

Proverbs 19:17

**Lendeth unto the Lord**; who takes what is done to them as done to himself, because it is done to them whom God, as to this particular, hath put in his own stead, to be his receivers, and



whom God hath in a peculiar manner commended to the care and charity of all other men.

Proverbs 19:18

**While there is hope;** before custom in sin, and thy indulgence, hath made him hard-hearted and incorrigible.

**Let not thy soul spare,** forbear not to give him due and necessary correction,

**for his crying,** which oft stirs up a foolish and pernicious pity in parents towards them. This word, with some small difference in the points, is used in this sense Isa\_24:11. Or, as it is in the margin, *to his destruction* , intimating that this is a cruel pity, and a likely way to expose him to that death threatened to stubborn sons, Deu\_21:18,21. But this clause is, and may be, rendered otherwise, *yet or but do not lift up thy soul* (which signifies a vehement desire, Deu\_24:15 Psa\_25:1 Jer\_44:14; let not thy passion or eager desire of chastening him transport thee so far as) *to cause him to die* , i.e. use moderation in this work.

Proverbs 19:19

**A man of great wrath;** or, he *who is of great wrath* , of strong passions; which may be understood either,

1. More particularly, of a son of such a temper, who is very impatient of correction, and breaks forth into violent passions upon that occasion; and then the following words contain the parent's duty, which is to take care to punish him, because if he spare him that thee for his passion, he must do so again and again, the same cause returning upon him, and so must wholly forbear to chasten him. Or,

2. More generally, of any man of a fierce and furious temper and carriage; and then the next words declare only the event, by his great and repeated provocations he will bring punishment upon himself, either from God or men.

**If thou deliver him;** if either a parent, or another person provoked by him, forbear to punish him. He turneth his speech to the party, as is usual in Scripture and in other authors.

**Thou must do it again**, Heb. *thou must add* , to wit, to deliver him again and again, as oft as he shall offend; or, thou wilt add or increase, to wit, his wrath, which thou shouldst subdue.

Proverbs 19:20

Before thy death come; which he adds not exclusively, as if he ought not to be wish before, but emphatically, to show that how foolishly soever he had spent his former and younger years, it highly concerned him to be wise before it was too late, or before death came.

Proverbs 19:21

**There are many devices in a man's heart**; understand out of the opposite clause, which shall not stand, but be disappointed.

**The counsel of the Lord**; his eternal, and unchangeable, and most wise decree, which oftentimes contradicts, and always overrules, the designs and purposes of men.

**Shall stand**, i.e. be certainly fulfilled, as this phrase is used, Jer\_44:28,29, and elsewhere.

Proverbs 19:22

**The desire of a man**; either,

1. Of any or every man. All men desire, and it is desirable, to be in a capacity of being kind and bountiful to others, whereby they gain love and honour, and many other great advantages. Or,

2. Of the poor man, expressed in the next clause. The hearty will or desire of being kind or liberal to others in necessity is all the kindness which a poor man can show, and is accepted by God, and should be owned by men as a real kindness. Compare 2Co\_8:12. Or,

3. Of the rich man, as may be gathered from the opposition of this man to the poor man in the following clause; such ellipses being very common in this book, as hath been noted again and again. So the sense may be this, There be a sort of rich men all whose kindness and charity consists in good desires and well wishes to persons in misery, *saying to them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, but not giving them those things which are needful, as it is expressed* , **Jas 2]** 6. And this sense seems to agree very well

with the following clause. But being singular in this exposition, I submit it to the judicious reader.

**A poor man**, who is not able to give what he desires to do,

**is better than a liar**; than a rich man, who feeds the poor with good words and fair promises, but doth not perform what he pretends and is able to do.

Proverbs 19:23

**Shall abide satisfied**; shall want nothing, and shall be fully contented with God's favour and blessing.

**With evil**; with any destructive affliction.

Proverbs 19:24

**Hideth his hand in his bosom**; either to keep it warm in cold weather; or to give it rest, being loth to oppress it with the labour of any action. It is a sarcastical hyperbole.

**Will not so much as bring it to his mouth again**, to wit, to feed himself; he expects that the meat should drop into his mouth.

Proverbs 19:25

**Smite a scorner**; an obstinate and impudent transgressor, who rejects and scorns all admonitions, and therefore is to be taught with blows.

**The simple**; who sin through ignorance, and imprudence, and infirmity, being possibly drawn to sin by the scorner's evil counsel or example.

**He will understand knowledge**; a verbal reproof will be more effectual for his reformation than the severest punishments will be to a scorner.

Proverbs 19:26

**Wasteth his father**, i.e. his father's estate, by unjust or riotous courses.

**Chaseth away his mother**; causeth her to avoid and abhor his presence and society, and to go from the house where he is. *Bringeth reproach* ; both to himself, and to his parents and family. But this verse may very well be rendered otherwise, the last words

being made the subjects of the proposition, as is usual in Scripture;

**A son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach,** ( upon himself and his friends by wicked ways,) *wasteth his father 's* (estate, and health, and comfort) *and chaseth or driveth away his mother* . These are the effects of his wickedness.

Proverbs 19:27

If thou hast formerly, yet do not now any longer hearken to those false doctrines or evil counsels which tend to withdraw thee from the belief or practice of God's holy word.

Proverbs 19:28

**Scorneth judgment;** hath no reverence to the place of justice, nor to the presence of God there, nor to that sacred and solemn work of executing judgment, but in spite of all gives in a false testimony.

**Devoureth iniquity;** uttereth with as great greediness, and delight, and ease, as they swallow down delicious meats and drinks. Compare Job\_15:16.

Proverbs 19:29

**Prepared,** either by men, or at least by God; although they: be deferred for a thee, yet they are treasured up for them, and shall infallibly be inflicted upon them.

## **Proverbs 20:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 20

**Wine is a mocker;** wine immoderately drunk makes men mockers or scoffers at God and men. Compare Hos\_7:5.

**Strong drink is raging;** makes men full of rage and passion.

**Is not wise;** is a fool, or a madman, because he depriveth himself of the use of his reason.

Proverbs 20:2

**The fear of a king,** passively taken, the terror which the wrath of a king causeth, by comparing this with Pro\_19:12.

**Sinneth against his own soul;** exposeth himself to manifest danger of death.

Proverbs 20:3

**To cease from strife;** either to prevent it, or, if it be begun, to put an end to it; which, although proud and profane persons esteem dishonourable to them, is indeed their glory, because it is an evidence of their great wisdom and power over their passions, and of their respect and obedience to their sovereign Lord, in which their honour and happiness consists.

**Will be meddling,** to wit, with matters of strife; he is always ready to begin strife, and obstinate in the continuance of it.

Proverbs 20:4

**By reason of the cold of the ploughing season,** which is in autumn and towards winter. He hates and avoids all laborious and difficult work, although his own necessity and interest oblige him to it.

**And have nothing;** and not obtain an alms; not in that time of plenty and bounty, because men's hearts are justly hardened against that man who by his own sloth and wilfulness hath brought himself to want.

Proverbs 20:5

**Counsel;** either,

1. Wisdom or ability to give good counsel; or,
2. Designs or purposes of doing something of moment; for this word is frequently used in both senses, but the last seems fittest here.

**Is like deep water;** either,

1. Is there in great abundance; or,
2. Is secret and hard to be discovered.

**Will draw it out,** by prudent questions and discourses, and a diligent observation of his words and actions.

Proverbs 20:6

Most men are forward to profess religion, and speak of their own good deeds; but a faithful man, one who is indeed what he seemeth and professeth himself to be,

**who can find?** there are but few such to be found.

Proverbs 20:7

**The just man walketh in his integrity;** he proveth himself to be so not only by his profession, of which he spoke in the former verse, but by his sincere and unblamable conversation. His children are blessed after him, by virtue of that covenant which God hath made with such men, which is not confined to their persons, but entaileth blessings upon their posterity.

Proverbs 20:8

**A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment;** that makes it his great care and business to execute judgment and justice among his people, especially if he do this in his own person, as was usual in ancient times, and sees things with his own eyes. As for the phrase, the sign or gesture is here put for the thing signified by it.

**Scattereth away all evil,** effectually punisheth and suppresseth all wickedness, *with his eyes* ; with his very looks, or by his diligent inspection into affairs.

Proverbs 20:9

**Who can say?** no man living upon earth can say this truly and sincerely. Compare 1Ki\_8:46 Job\_14:4 **15:14** Ecc\_7:20 1Jo\_1:8. *I am pure from my sin* ; I am perfectly free from all guilt and filth of sin in my heart and life.

Proverbs 20:10

**Divers weights and divers measures;** one greater and true for public show, and one lesser and false for private use, when they had an opportunity of deceiving.

Proverbs 20:11

**Even a child is known by his doings;** young children discover their inclinations or dispositions even by their childish speeches and carriage, as not having yet learnt the art of dissembling.

**Whether his work be pure;** or rather, *will be pure* ; for it is not expressed in the Hebrew, and therefore may be either way supplied. The sense is, The future disposition and conversation of a man may very probably be conjectured from his childish manners.

Proverbs 20:12

It is God alone who gives us our senses and natural faculties, and the use and exercise of them, and especially a power of employing them aright to see and observe the works of God, and to hear and receive his word and all wholesome instructions; whence he leaves it to us to gather, that God doth exactly see and hear all men's words and actions, though it be never so secret. He names

**the eye and**

**ear**, because these are the two senses by which instructions are conveyed to *the mind* ; but under them he seems to comprehend all other senses and powers of soul or body, by a synecdoche.

Proverbs 20:13

**Love not sleep**, i.e. immoderate sleep, or sloth, or idleness. Take sleep because necessity requires it, not from any love to it.

**Open thine eyes**; awake out of sleep, shake off sloth, and betake thyself to thy employment with diligence and rigour.

Proverbs 20:14

**It is naught**; the commodity is but of little worth. Saith the buyer, to wit, to the seller; he discommends it, that he may bring down the price of it.

**Gone his way**, with the commodity purchased.

**He boasteth** that by his wit he hath overreached the seller, and got a great advantage to himself. This he notes as a common but reprobable practice.

Proverbs 20:15

**There is gold**, to wit, in the world, in divers men's hands, by whom it is highly prized.

**But the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel**; but wise speeches proceeding from an understanding or honest heart are of far greater worth and use, both to him that uttereth them, and to those that receive and improve them to their own benefit.

Proverbs 20:16

**Take his garment**, to wit, as a pledge, without which he ought not to be trusted, because by this action he showeth himself to be a fool, and he taketh the ready way to beggary.

**Object.** This precept contradicts that law which forbade the taking of a garment for a pledge, Exo\_22:26.

**Answ.** It doth not contradict it, for the cases vastly differ; for that law concerned only the poor, who were forced to borrow for their own necessity, and therefore deserve pity; whereas this teacheth only those who are or would be thought rich and sufficient security for others, and who borrow not for their own need, but for a mere stranger, for which folly they deserve to be severely punished. Besides, this may be only a prediction, though it be delivered in the form of a precept, as many predictions are; and so shows what may be expected by him that is guilty of such folly, even that he shall be stripped of his garments and other necessaries. *For a stranger* ; for a foreigner, or a person unknown to him. *Take a pledge of him* that is surety; which words are to be understood out of the foregoing clause. *For a strange woman* ; for a harlot, who is so called, Pro\_2:16, and elsewhere.

Proverbs 20:17

**Bread of deceit;** gain or pleasure procured by unrighteous courses.

**His mouth shall be filled with gravel;** it shall be bitter and pernicious at last, like gritty bread, which offends the teeth and stomach. It will certainly bring upon him the horrors of a guilty conscience, and the wrath and judgments of the Almighty God.

Proverbs 20:18

**Every purpose is established by counsel;** the way to bring our purposes and desires to a good effect, is to manage them with serious consideration and good advice. *And* ; or, *therefore* . This is necessary in every common undertaking, and much more in a thing of such high importance as war is.

Proverbs 20:19

**He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets;** he that delighteth in and accustometh himself to the practice of spreading tales or evil reports, will not forbear to publish the greatest secrets which are committed to his trust. Or, as others render it, and as the words lie in the Hebrew text,

**He that revealeth secrets,** ( contrary to his promise or the trust reposed in him, you may by that token be assured that,)



**he doth and will go about as a tale-bearer.** He who divulgeth secrets cannot or will not forbear to publish other things, and so is not fit to be trusted with any thing.

**Therefore,** to prevent that mischief Heb. *and* . So the following sentence is not inferred from the former, but only added to it.

**Meddle not with him,** avoid frequent and familiar society and conversation with him, *that flattereth with his lips* ; by which artifice he seeks to gain thy affections, and to fish out all thy secrets, which he may impart to others, whom he may oblige hereby, and so render his company more acceptable.

Proverbs 20:20

**Or his mother,** Heb. *and his mother* ; which is used for *or* , Exo\_12:5 Lev\_6:3, and elsewhere.

**His lamp;** his comfort and happiness, his name and memory, which are oft compared in Scripture to

**a lamp or light; shall be put out in obscure darkness;** shall utterly perish; he shall die childless, and with ignominy.

Proverbs 20:21

**An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning;** an estate sometimes is got suddenly, in the very beginning of a man's labours for it; in which case it may be presumed that some indirect and unrighteous courses were used for the getting of it, because riches are very seldom given by God, or gotten by men, without men's diligence. But this, as well as many other proverbs, are to be understood of the common course, although it admit of some exceptions. For sometimes merchants or others get great estates speedily by one happy voyage, or by some other prosperous event. This translation follows the Hebrew marginal reading, but according to the textual reading it may be thus rendered and understood; *An inheritance gotten in the beginning* (to wit, of a man's endeavours) *is abominable* , to wit, *unto God* , being supposed to be unjustly gotten, as was now said.

**The end thereof shall not be blessed;** at last it shall be cursed and wither by God's just judgment.

Proverbs 20:22

**Say not thou in thy heart;** give not way to any such evil thoughts or purposes.

**Wait on the Lord,** to whom it belongs to execute vengeance, and to deliver his people from all their enemies.

Proverbs 20:23

**Divers weights are an abomination unto the Lord;** of which **See Poole "Pro\_20:10"**.

**Is not good;** is very wicked and hateful to God and men.

Proverbs 20:24

**Man's goings,** all men's purposes and actions,

**are of the Lord;** are ordered and overruled by God's wise and powerful providence to accomplish his own counsel and good pleasure, and not what men list or intend.

**His own way;** either,

1. What course he ought to take; which he cannot know without God's direction and assistance: compare Pro\_16:9 Jer\_10:23. Or,

2. What is the issue of his designs will be, whether they shall succeed or be disappointed; the way being taken for the end or event to which it leads, as it is in many other places. The scope of the proverb is to show that all the events of human life are neither ordered nor foreseen by man's, but only by God's providence, and therefore men should only mind the doing of their duty, and then quietly depend upon God for a good issue to their endeavours.

Proverbs 20:25

**It is a snare;** it brings guilt and God's curse and vengeance upon him.

**That which is holy,** i.e. those meats or drinks which were devoted or consecrated to God; under which one kind he comprehends and forbids all alienation of sacred or dedicated things from God to a man's private use or benefit; of which see Lev\_27:9 Deu\_23:21 Mal\_3:8,9 Ac 5:1, &c.

**After vows to make inquiry;** after a man hath made vows to consider whether he can possibly or may lawfully keep them, and

to invent or inquire of others all ways possible to break his vow, and to satisfy or deceive his conscience in so doing; which inquiry is justly censured as a sin and snare, because it is an evidence of a covetous or irreligious mind, and is the ready way and first step towards the open violation of it.

Proverbs 20:26

**A wise king**, who seriously minds his duty and his true interest,

**scattereth the wicked**; breaks their companies and confederacies, and forceth them to flee several ways for their own safety; driveth them from his presence, and from the society of honest men, as the chaff is by the husbandman separated from the corn, and driven away by the wind, of which this Hebrew word is commonly used, and to which the next clause hath some reference.

**Bringeth the wheel over them**, as the cart-wheel was anciently turned over the sheaves to beat the corn out of them, Isa\_28:27,28. He punisheth them severely, as their offences deserve. This or such-like punishments were not unusual among the Eastern nations, as we may gather from 2Sa\_8:2 **12:31** Amo\_1:3.

Proverbs 20:27

**The spirit**, i.e. the reasonable soul.

**Is the candle**; is a clear and glorious light set up in man for his information and direction.

**Of the Lord**; so called, partly because it comes from God in a more immediate and peculiar manner than the body doth, Ecc\_12:7; and partly because it is in God's stead to observe and judge all a man's actions.

**Searching all the inward parts of the belly**; discerning not only his outward actions, which are visible to others, but his most inward and secret thoughts and affections, which no other man can see, 1Co\_2:11. The *belly* is here put for the *heart*, as it is frequently. The soul can reflect upon and judge of its own dispositions and actions; which plainly showeth that the heart is not so deceitful, but that a man by diligent study of it, and the use of the means appointed by God, may arrive at a certain knowledge of its state and condition, in reference to God and to salvation.

Proverbs 20:28

**Mercy**; clemency to offenders, and bounty to worthy and to indigent persons; and truth; faithfulness in keeping his word and promises inviolably; preserve the king, because they engage God to guard him, and gain him the reverence and affections of his people, which is a king's greatest safety and happiness.

**Mercy** is again mentioned, to show that although it be an act of grace, and therefore in some sort free, yet princes are obliged to it, both by their duty and by their interest, because it is a singular means of their preservation.

Proverbs 20:29

**The glory of young men**; that wherein they glory as their privilege above old men.

**The beauty of old men is the grey head**, i.e. their old age, expressed by the outward sign of it, wherein they glory as their peculiar privilege, as a testimony of their piety and God's blessing, and as a token of their great experience and wisdom. The design of this proverb is to declare the several advantages of several ages, and the mutual need they have one of another, and thereby to engage them to mutual love and assistance, and to friendly converse, and to make every one contented with his own age and condition, and not to envy nor yet despise his brother, or the difference of their ages, as is very usual among men.

Proverbs 20:30

**The blueness of a wound**, grievous wounds, which make men black and blue, or severe punishments,

**cleanseth away evil**; are the most effectual means to reclaim a wicked man, and to purge out his corruption.

**So do stripes**, Heb. *and stripes* , which answer to the *wounds* in the former clause,

**the inward parts of the belly**; either,

1. Which pierce even to the inward parts of the belly; and so we are to understand out of the former branch, *cleanse away evil* . Or,
2. They cleanse the inward parts of the belly, i.e. of the heart. So this is an addition to the former clause, and the sense of the whole

is, Grievous wounds or stripes do cleanse not only the outward man, by keeping it from evil actions, but even the inward man, by expelling or subduing vile affections; which is mentioned as a great and blessed benefit of afflictions.

### **Proverbs 21:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 21

**The king's heart;** his very inward purposes and inclinations, which seem to be most in a man's own power, and out of the reach of all others, and much more his tongue and hand, and all his outward actions. He names *kings* not to exclude other men, but because they are more arbitrary and uncontrollable than other men.

**As the rivers of water;** which husbandmen or gardeners can draw by little channels into the adjacent grounds as they please, and as their occasions require.

**He turneth it;** directeth and boweth, partly by suggesting those things to their minds which have a commanding influence upon their wills; and partly by a direct and immediate motion of their wills and affections, which being God's creatures must needs be as subject to his power and pleasure as either men's minds or bodies are, and which he moves sweetly and suitably to their own nature, though strongly and effectually.

**Withersoever he will;** so as they shall fulfil his counsels and designs, either of mercy or of correction to themselves, or to their people.

#### Proverbs 21:2

This was said Pro\_16:2, where it is explained, and is here repeated, either for the great importance and usefulness of it, or because he perceived that the Israelites were very prone to self-deceit.

#### Proverbs 21:3

**Justice and judgment;** the conscientious performance of all our duties to men.

**Than sacrifice;** than the most costly outward services offered to God, joined with the neglect of our moral duties to God or men. The same thing is affirmed 1Sa\_15:22 Hos\_6:6 Mic\_6:7.

Proverbs 21:4

**An high look;** one gesture or sign of pride put for all the rest, Pro\_6:17.

**A proud heart;** pride lurking and reigning in the heart, though it do not discover itself to men by outward actions, but be disguised with a show of humility, it is frequently.

**The ploughing;** either,

1. Strictly and properly so called: even their civil or natural actions, which in themselves are lawful and good, are made sinful, as they are managed by ungodly men, without any regard to the service and glory of God, which ought to be the great end of all our actions, 1Co\_10:31, and with a design of serving their own wicked lusts by it. Or,

2. Metaphorically, their designs and endeavours, which are said to be *sin*, because they are wholly and fully set upon sin, and they make sin their trade or business, which is called *ploughing wickedness*, Job\_4:8. But all the ancient interpreters, and divers others, render the word *the lamp* or *light*, as this Hebrew word, even thus pointed, is rendered, 1Ki\_11:36 **15:4** 2Ki\_8:19 2Ch\_21:7; and *the lamp of the wicked* is a phrase used in this book, Pro\_13:9 **24:20**, as also Job\_21:17; whereas *the ploughing of the wicked* is a phrase not elsewhere used. And this seems best to agree with the context, for by their lamp he seems to understand all their pomp and glory, that worldly greatness and prosperity, which is the fuel of their pride, and therefore is most fitly joined with it. *Is sin*; it is by them turned into sin, and made the occasion of much wickedness. The whole verse may be thus rendered, *An high look and a proud heart*, which is *the light or glory of the wicked*, (i.e. wherein they glory, esteeming it magnanimity or gallantry of spirit,) *is sin*, i.e. is a great and grievous sin. And in this manner the learned Mercer renders the verse, save only that he translates the Hebrew word *nir*, *the ploughing*.

Proverbs 21:5

**The diligent,** who carefully and industriously prosecutes what he hath wisely contrived and resolved.

**That is hasty;** who manageth his affairs rashly, without due consideration.

**Only to want;** is likely to bring himself to poverty.

Proverbs 21:6

**By a lying tongue;** by false witness-hearing, or by any other false or deceitful words or actions, whereby many men get riches.

**Is a vanity tossed to and fro;** is like the chaff or smoke driven away by the wind; it is neither satisfactory nor durable, but quickly vanisheth away, as hath been frequently observed of estates ill gotten.

**That seek death;** not designedly, but eventually, that take those courses which will bring death or destruction upon them or theirs.

Proverbs 21:7

**The robbery of the wicked shall destroy them;** the injury which they do to others shall either by God or men be returned upon their own heads. They refuse to do judgment; they wilfully and obstinately give up themselves to unrighteous practices.

Proverbs 21:8

**The way of man;** the course of his life. *Of man* ; of every man; of man by nature and in his corrupt estate; of a wicked or impure man, to whom the pure is opposed in the next clause.

**Strange;** estranged from God and from man's primitive integrity, and from the rule of his actions, reason and Scripture; in which respects wicked men are called *strangers* , Psa\_54:3 Eze\_44:7, and elsewhere.

**But as for the pure, his work is right;** but he whose heart is pure and upright, his conversation is agreeable to it.

Proverbs 21:9

**To dwell,** to wit, alone in quietness, as appears from the opposite clause.

**Of the house-top;** of the roof of the house, which in those countries was flat and plain, and habitable, but was exposed to all the injuries of the weather. In a

**wide house;** or, in a common house; or, a house of society, where husband and wife live together, or which is capable of many friends or companies.

Proverbs 21:10

**The soul of the wicked desireth evil; his heart is fully and earnestly set in him**, as it is expressed, Ecc\_8:11, to do evil, to work wickedness, to do mischief to others, to satisfy his own lusts, though it be with injury of others.

**His neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes**, if he either dissuade him from his wickedness, or stand in the way of his lusts. He spares neither friend nor foe.

Proverbs 21:11

**The simple**; the honest or plain-hearted man, as Pro\_19:25, where this whole verse for the substance of it is contained and explained.

**Instructed**; or,  *prospers* , as this word is used, Pro\_17:8, and elsewhere. So the sense of the verse is, The simple learn wisdom, both from the punishment of wicked men, and from the prosperity of good men.

Proverbs 21:12

**Wisely considereth the house of the wicked**; he looketh through its present power and glory (which dazzleth the eyes of others) unto that ruin to which it is designed. But, or now, or that, this being the thing which he wisely considereth,

**God overthroweth**, or will overthrow in his due time, though for a season he bear with them.

Proverbs 21:13

**Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor**, when they cry out by reason of oppression or want, and beg relief from him, he also shall cry himself unto God or men, in his straits which God will bring upon him.

Proverbs 21:14

**A gift**, to a person offended and angry with us, as the following words show.

**In secret**; which makes it more acceptable; for gifts openly given savour of ostentation in the giver, and cause some shame or contempt to the receiver.

**In the bosom**; secretly conveyed into his bosom. See Poole "Pro\_17:8", See Poole "Pro\_18:16".



Proverbs 21:15

**It is joy to the just:** the sense is either,

1. He is highly pleased and delighted with it. Or,
2. He reapeth much comfort and benefit by it, which is opposed to the following destruction: *joy* is put for matter or *cause of joy* .

**To do judgment;** to do what is just or good, for this is opposed to *working of iniquity* .

**Destruction;** or, as others render it, *terror* or *horror* , opposite to joy.

Proverbs 21:16

**The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding;** that forsaketh the rule of God's word, and walketh after his own lusts;

**shall remain in the congregation of the dead;** shall, without repentance, be condemned to eternal death or damnation.

Proverbs 21:17

**He that loveth pleasure,** that gives up himself to the pursuit and enjoyment of sensual and immoderate pleasures,

**shall be a poor man;** takes the ready course to poverty.

**Wine and oil** are put for all delicious fare and luxurious feasting; for wine and oil were much used in feasts in those parts.

Proverbs 21:18

The wicked shall be brought into those troubles which were either threatened by God or designed by wicked men against the righteous, and by that means, as by a ransom, the righteous shall be delivered. Thus Achan was a ransom for Israel, Jos\_7:26, and Haman for Mordecai.

Proverbs 21:19

**Than,** understand, *in a wide house* , as it is expressed above, Pro\_21:9, and as the opposition here requires.

Proverbs 21:20

Wise men lay up all necessary and desirable treasures for their own use, and for their children and families.

**Oil** is particularly mentioned, partly because that was a considerable part of their wealth and treasures in those countries,

of which see Deu\_7:13 **28:40,51 Jud 9:9** Mic\_5:15, &c.; and partly to show that his providence reached not only to necessities, but even to matters of just and lawful delight.

Proverbs 21:21

**That followeth after;** that fervently desires, and diligently and constantly endeavours, to attain to them, for such shall and will certainly obtain them.

**Righteousness and mercy;** living in the constant exercise of these virtues.

**Findeth;** shall obtain from God what is right and due to him; either from God, by virtue of his gracious promise; or from men, whose hearts God will dispose to deal justly and kindly with him.

Proverbs 21:22

**A wise man sealeth the city of the mighty;** wisdom and policy is oftentimes more considerable and powerful than strength.

**The strength of the confidence thereof;** the strongest forts, to which the citizens trust most for their defence.

Proverbs 21:23

**Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue** from offensive and provoking speeches, keepeth his soul, his person, from troubles; which a licentious and abusive tongue frequently brings upon a man.

Proverbs 21:24

**Proud and haughty scorner is his name;** instead of that respect and glory which he seeks by such courses, he shall be branded with the title and imputation of an arrogant and scornful person, which is most contemptible and hateful to mankind.

**Who dealeth in proud wrath;** who in the conduct of his affairs and dealings in the world is not governed by reason and justice, but by his own pride and passions.

Proverbs 21:25

**Killeth him;** either,

1. Tormenteth him almost to death, whilst he passionately desires that which he sees he shall not enjoy, and will not take pains to procure. Or,

2. Expositeth him to extreme want, and so to death, or to such wicked courses, for the supply of his wants, as bring him to an untimely death.

Proverbs 21:26

**He coveteth;** the slothful man, mentioned in the last verse. But because the verses in this book are for the most part independent one upon another, this clause is and may be otherwise rendered, There is that *coveteth* , &c.; or, the wicked (which may be understood from the opposition of the *righteous* in the next clause) *coveteth* , &c.

**All the day long;** spends his whole time in vain and lazy desires, but will not labour to get any thing, either to use himself, or to give to others.

**The righteous giveth and spareth not;** by God's blessing upon his industry he procures enough, not only for his own support, but also for the liberal relief of others.

Proverbs 21:27

**The sacrifice;** all the most glorious and costly services which they offer to God.

**Is abomination;** God rejects and abhors them, because they are offered by such men and in such manner as God justly abhors.

**When;** or, *because* , as all the ancient translators render it, the Hebrew particle *aph* being expletive; or, *even because* ; so the following clause gives the reason of the former proposition.

**With a wicked mind;** with a hypocritical and impenitent heart, or with a bad design, not in obedience to God's command, and with respect to his honour and service; but either to cover, or countenance, or promote some wicked intention or course, which notwithstanding all his professions of religion he is resolved to prosecute.

Proverbs 21:28

**A false witness,** Heb. *a witness of lies* ; one who is forward to swear or speak false things, or such things as he hath not heard nor learned from others, nor seen, but devised in his own heart.

**Shall perish;** shall be severely punished, either by God or men, and shall be confounded and silenced, because none will for the future regard or credit his testimony. The man that heareth; he who hears before he speaks, and witnesseth nothing but what he hath heard or seen, and knows to be true.

**Speaketh constantly;** doth not contradict himself, but always affirmeth the same thing. Or, as most other interpreters render the words, *speaketh* (or, *may speak* , dare speak freely and boldly) *for ever* ; when liars are cut off, he lives, and is in a capacity of speaking and bearing witness again and again, as occasion requires, as long as he lives, and his testimony will be received.

Proverbs 21:29

**Hardeneth his face;** continueth in evil courses with obstinacy and impudence, in spite of all the commands of God, or counsels of men.

**He directeth his way;** he ordereth his steps aright; and if at any time, he goeth awry, he doth not add rebellion to his sin, nor persist in his error, but considereth his ways, and turneth his feet to God's testimonies, as David did, Psa\_119:59. Or, *considereth his way* , remembering with grief and shame what he hath done, and taking better heed to himself for the future.

Proverbs 21:30

Which can prevail against the counsel and will of God.

Proverbs 21:31

**The horse;** under which particular all warlike provisions are comprehended.

**Safety is of the Lord;** the success of the battle depends not upon any human strength or art, but merely upon God's providence, who gives the victory when and to whom he pleaseth, and oftentimes to those that have least reason to expect it. Compare Ecc\_9:11.

## **Proverbs 22:1 PROVERBS CHAPTER 22**

**A good name,** Heb. *name put for good name* , as Ecc\_7:1, the word *good* being easily understood out of the next clause, in

which it is expressed in the Hebrew text. A good reputation amongst wise and good men.

**Is rather to be chosen than great riches;** partly, because it is a most special blessing from God, being appropriated to worthy persons, whereas God commonly throws away riches upon the basest of men; partly, because it gives a man that tranquillity and satisfaction of mind, and that content and comfort in his condition, which no riches can purchase; and partly, because as it is commonly an evidence of a man's virtue and piety, so it is accompanied with God's love and favour, whereas riches are oft given by God in wrath, and to the hurt of the owner.

**Loving favour;** or, *good grace or favour* ; a good report among men, especially among good men, and that hearty love and kindness which attends upon it.

Proverbs 22:2

**The rich and poor meet together;** either,

1. In a way of hostility or opposition, as this word is sometimes used; the rich contemning and oppressing the poor, and the poor envying and purloining from the rich; and so the following words are a reason why that hostility should cease. Or,

2. In the way of mutual converse; they live together, and need one another.

**The Lord is the Maker of them all;** not only as they are men, but also as they are poor or rich, which difference comes wholly from God's providence; they have one common Creator, and Lord, and Judge, and the one cannot despise nor grudge at the other without a reflection upon God.

Proverbs 22:3

**The evil;** the calamity or judgment of God threatened and approaching.

**Hideh himself;** retireth to his strong tower, mentioned Pro\_18:10; by prayer and repentance putteth himself under the protection of the Almighty. Compare Isa\_26:20.

**Pass on** in their former road and course of sin, carelessly and securely, as travellers do in a road where they apprehend no danger.

Proverbs 22:4

**By humility;** or, *because of humility* ; or, as many others render it, *the reward of humility* ; that reward which God hath graciously promised and will give to humility; which is a grace of great price in God's eyes. See Isa\_57:15 Jam\_4:6.

**The fear of the Lord;** by which he distinguisheth true and Christian humility from counterfeit and moral humility, because that ariseth from a deep sense of God's greatness, and purity, and perfection, compared with our meanness, and filthiness and manifold imperfections, whereas this is quite of another nature, and from other grounds.

**Life;** the comforts of this life, and the happiness of the next, both which are promised to godliness, 1Th\_4:8.

Proverbs 22:5

**Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward;** the wicked by their evil courses expose themselves to many dangers and occasions both of sin and mischief.

**He that doth keep his soul,** that taketh heed to himself, and to his actions, and to the saving of his life and soul,

**shall be far from them;** either,

1. Will avoid the society of such froward persons. Or,
2. Shall by that circumspection preserve himself from those *thorns* , &c., with which the pronoun them agrees in number.

Proverbs 22:6

**Train up,** or, *initiate or instruct, a child in the way he should go* , Heb. *in or according to his way* , i.e. either,

1. According to his capacity. Or rather,
2. In that course or manner of life which thou wouldst have him choose and follow. Or, as one learned man renders it, *in the beginning of his way* , i.e. in his tender years, as soon as he is capable of instruction. Heb. *in the mouth* , &c. *The mouth* is oft

put for the beginning or entrance of any place, as Gen\_29:2 Jos\_10:18 Pro\_8:3 Dan\_6:17. *Will not depart from it* , to wit, not easily and ordinarily. The impressions made in childish years will remain, as hath been observed by all sorts of learned writers. But this, as many proverbs of like nature, are not to be understood as if they were universally and necessarily true, which experience confutes, but because it is so for the most part, except some extraordinary cause hinder it.

Proverbs 22:7

**Ruleth over the poor**, to wit, with rigour and tyranny, taking advantage of his necessities.

**Is servant to the lender**; is at his mercy, and therefore forced to comply with his pleasure. The design of the proverb is partly to correct this miscarriage of the rich, and partly to oblige all men to diligence, whereby they may deliver themselves from this servitude.

Proverbs 22:8

**He that soweth iniquity**, or *unrighteousness* , whose common practice it is to wrong or oppress others,

**shall reap vanity**; or, *trouble* or *misery* , as this word is commonly used, and as divers here render it. The mischief which he hath done to others shall be returned to him by God's righteous sentence.

**The rod of his anger shall fail**; that power which he used with fury and cruelty shall be taken away from him.

Proverbs 22:9

**He that hath a bountiful eye**, Heb. *a good eye* , he who looks upon the wants and miseries of others with compassion and kindness, as this phrase is used, Mat\_20:15; as *an evil eye* is put for one that beholds others with envy and unmercifulness, Deu\_15:9 Pro\_23:6 **28:22**

**Shall be blessed**, both by God and men.

Proverbs 22:10

**Cast out of your society**, avoid conversation with, the scorner; who neither fears God, nor reverences man, but scorns all admonitions, and minds only the pleasing of himself, and the

gratifying of his own lusts, which is the chief cause of most contentions.

**Strife and reproach;** wherewith he loads those that either oppose or admonish him.

Proverbs 22:11

**That loveth pureness of heart;** who is plain-hearted or sincere, and abhors dissimulation. For the grace of his lips; for those gracious speeches which naturally and commonly flow from a pure heart. Or, and (understand, *loveth*, out of the former clause) *grace of his lips*; whose discourse is gracious and sincere.

**The king shall be his friend;** the greatest men will, or should, desire and highly prize the acquaintance and advice of such persons, rather than of dissemblers and flatterers, wherewith they are most commonly pestered.

Proverbs 22:12

**The eyes of the Lord preserve,** God by the watchful eye of his providence maintains and defends,

**knowledge,** to wit, men of knowledge; the abstract being put for the concrete, as *pride* is put for *a proud man*, Psa\_36:11, *deceit for the deceitful*, as Pro\_12:17: so here *knowledge* for knowing and good men, such as the last verse spoke of, whose hearts are pure, and speeches gracious; not only the king shall be their friend, as he said there, but God also, which he adds here,

**The words;** their false and flattering speeches, whereby they designed and expected to gain the favour and friendship of great men, which are opposed to the sincere and gracious speeches of good men, implied in the first cause of this verse, and expressed in the foregoing verse; or, as others render it, and the word is very commonly used, the matters; all his counsels, hopes, enterprises, and concerns.

Proverbs 22:13

**Saith,** allegeth as his excuse to them who upbraid him with idleness, or persuade him to diligence,

**There is a lion without;** there are extreme dangers and invincible difficulties in my way.



**I shall be slain**, by that lion, or some other way.

**In the streets**; which is added to show the ridiculousness of his excuse; for lions abide in the woods or fields, not in the streets of towns or cities.

Proverbs 22:14

**The mouth**; her fair and flattering speeches, wherewith she enticeth him to gross filthiness, as it is noted, Pro\_7:21.

**A deep pit**; into which it is easy to fall, but hard, if not impossible, to get out of it. It is a rare thing for any person, once entered into the course of whoredom, sincerely to repent of it, and turn from it. See Pro\_2:19.

**That is abhorred of the Lord**, to wit, in a high and singular manner; who by his former impieties, and contempt of God and of his grace, hath provoked God to leave and loathe him, and to punish one sin with another; for otherwise all sinners, as such, are abhorred by God.

Proverbs 22:15

**Is bound**; is fixed and settled there, as being born with him, and rooted in his very nature, and not plucked up without great difficulty and diligence.

**The rod of correction shall drive it far from him**; the smart of punishment makes him weary of his sin, and watchful against it.

Proverbs 22:16

**That giveth to the rich**; that vainly and prodigally casts away his estate upon those who do not need it, or gives it to them with evil design, as that they may assist him in oppressing the poor, or at least not hinder him in it.

Proverbs 22:17

**Of the wise**; of wise and holy men of God.

**Apply thine heart**; thirst after it, and give of thyself to the diligent study of it.

**My knowledge**; the knowledge of God, and of thy several duties, which I am here delivering to thee.

Proverbs 22:18

**If thou keep them**, the words of the wise, within thee, Heb. *in thy belly* . i.e. in thine heart, which implies receiving them in love, and retaining them in mind and memory.

**Be fitted**; be fitly expressed; or, be *disposed* or *ordered* . The sense is, When thou hast got them into thine heart, thou wilt be able and ready to discourse pertinently and profitably of them.

Proverbs 22:19

That knowing God, and his word and promises, thou mayst cheerfully and confidently trust in him, which is the only way to thy safety and happiness.

Proverbs 22:20

**Excellent things**; or, *princely things* , as they are called, Pro\_8:6, the great things of God's law, as Hos\_8:12.

**In counsels and knowledge**; consisting of counsels to direct thy practice, and *knowledge* to inform and enrich thy mind. Or by that known figure *hendiadis* , *in counsels of knowledge* , i.e. in good counsels, which proceed from sound knowledge, and make a man knowing and wise, which are opposed to the counsels of the wicked, Pro\_12:5, which are without knowledge.

Proverbs 22:21

**That I may make thee know the certainty of the words of truth**; that I may teach thee, not false, or vain, or uncertain things, as the teachers of the heathen nations do, but the true and infallible oracles of God.

**That thou mightest answer the words of truth**; that being instructed by me, thou mayst be able to give true, and solid, and satisfactory answers.

**To them that send unto thee**, to wit, for thine advice in great and difficult matters. Or, *to those that send thee* , i.e. that employ the in any business of moment, whereof they expect an account from thee.

Proverbs 22:22

**Because he is poor**: this may be mentioned, either,

1. As a motive to this robbery, because he was unable to resist him, or to revenge himself upon him. Do not take advantage of his poverty. Or,

2. As an argument against it, because he is a fitter object for thy pity and charity, than for thy injustice or cruelty. It is base and inhuman to crush such a person.

**In the gate;** in the place of judgment, or under pretence of justice, and much less in other ways, where there is no colour of justice.

Proverbs 22:23

**Will plead their cause;** which he hath in a peculiar manner undertaken to do.

**Spoil the soul;** take away not only their goods, but their lives too; so fully will he recompense their wickedness to them.

Proverbs 22:24

Into his company; not converse frequently and familiarly with him, as friends use to do.

Proverbs 22:25

**Lest thou learn his ways;** lest thou be infected by his example, or provoked by this passion to return the like to him.

**A snare;** either,

1. A mischief, which is oft the effect of unbridled rage. Or,

2. An occasion of sin; either by drawing thee to an imitation or requital of his rage; or by tempting thee to unfaithfulness in performing the great office of a friend, to wit, admonition or reproof, which, by reason of his furious temper, thou either canst not or wilt not do.

Proverbs 22:26

To wit, rashly, or unnecessarily.

Proverbs 22:27

Why wilt thou put thyself into the hands of such a man, who will exact the debt from thee without any compassion? For though God did not allow this practice, covetous creditors would frequently do it.

Proverbs 22:28

**Landmark**, whereby the lands of several possessors were distinguished and divided. Do not enrich thyself with the injury of other men; do not invade the rights of others.

Proverbs 22:29

**Diligent**; or, *expeditious*, as the word properly signifies; one of quick despatch, vigorous and speedy in executing what hath been well and wisely contrived.

**He shall stand before kings**; he is fit to be employed in the affairs of the greatest princes.

### **Proverbs 23:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 23

**When thou sittest to eat with a ruler**, when thou art invited to a feast with a great man,

**consider diligently what is before thee**; either

1. What person or persons. Or rather,
2. What things; what plenty and variety of meats and drinks, by which thou mayst easily be tempted to excess, and by that means induced to use such speeches or carriages as may be unfit for thee, or many ways hurtful to thee.

Proverbs 23:2

**Put a knife to thy throat**; restrain and moderate thine appetite, as if a knife or some other thing stuck in thy throat, and hindered thee from swallowing what thou didst desire; or as if a man stood with a knife at thy throat ready to kill thee, if thou didst transgress; or though it be as irksome to thee to do so as if thou hadst a knife put to thy throat. So this is to be understood metaphorically, as that phrase of

**cutting off the right hand**, & c., Mat\_5:29,30. Or, *For thou dost* (or, *lest thou shouldst*, as the Syriac interpreter renders it; or, otherwise thou wilt or shouldst) put a knife to thy throat. So the sense is, When thou goest to their feasts, thou dost expose thyself to great and manifest hazards, to thy own intemperance, and to all its dangerous consequences, and to the ill effects of other men's intemperance.

**Given to appetite;** prone to excess in eating and drinking.

Proverbs 23:3

Either because they do not yield thee that satisfaction which thou didst expect from them, but rather load thee with ill humours, and the seeds of divers diseases; or because they are not provided for thee with sincerity and good will, but with some evil design upon thee, either to discover and betray thee, or to enslave thee. **See Poole "Pro\_23:6,7"**.

Proverbs 23:4

**Labour not,** Heb. *Do not weary thyself with immoderate cares and labours* , as many covetous men do.

**From thine own wisdom;** from that carnal wisdom which is natural to man in his corrupt estate, which persuades men to believe that it is their interest to use all possible means to get riches, and that the happiness of their lives consists in the abundance of their possessions, directly contrary to the assertion of our blessed Lord, Luk\_12:15.

Proverbs 23:5

**Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that,** i.e. look upon it with earnestness and greedy desire, employing the eyes of thy mind and body about it.

**Which is not;** which hath no solid and settled being; which is ours to have, but not to hold; which is always upon the wing, and oftentimes gone in the twinkling of an eye, so that the owner is frequently at a loss, and cannot tell whether he hath his estate, or whether he hath lost it.

**They fly away as an eagle,** swiftly, strongly, and irrevocably. We quickly lose the sight and possession of them. Their flying away from us is elegantly opposed to our eyes being set, or, as it is in the Hebrew, flying upon them, in the beginning of the verse.

Proverbs 23:6

**Of him that hath an evil eye;** of the envious or covetous man, who secretly grudgeth thee the meat which he sets before thee, as this phrase is used, Pro\_28:22 Mat\_20:15; as, on the contrary, a liberal man is said to have a *good eye* , Pro\_22:9.

Proverbs 23:7

**As he thinketh in his heart**, so is he: you are not to judge of him by his words, for so he professeth kindness, as it follows; but by the constant temper of his mind, which he hath fully discovered to all that know him by the course of his life.

**His heart is not with thee**; he hath no sincere kindness to thee, but inwardly grudgeth thee that which he outwardly offers to thee.

Proverbs 23:8

When thou perceivest his churlish disposition and carriage, his meat will be loathsome to thee, and thou wilt wish either that thou hadst never eaten it, or that thou couldst vomit it up again.

**Thy sweet words**; thy pleasant discourse, wherewith thou didst adorn his table, and design both to delight and profit him, is lost, and of no effect to him, and thou wilt be ready to repent of it.

Proverbs 23:9

**Speak not in the ears of a fool**; cast not away good counsels upon obstinate and incorrigible sinners. We have the same advice given Mat\_7:6.

**He will despise the wisdom of thy words**; he will scornfully reject thy wise and good admonitions.

Proverbs 23:10

Either to take away their goods; or rather, to possess their lands, as this phrase is used, 2Sa\_5:6.

Proverbs 23:11

**Their redeemer**, Heb. *their near kinsman* , to whom it belongs to avenge their wrongs, and to recover and maintain their rights, of which see Lev\_25:25 Num\_35:12. Thus God is pleased to call himself, to show how much he concerns himself for the relief of oppressed and helpless persons.

Proverbs 23:12

**Apply thine heart unto instruction**; content not thyself with outward hearing or reading of it, but affectionately receive it into thine heart, and lay it up there as choice treasure.

Proverbs 23:13

It is a likely mean to prevent their corruption, and the destruction which commonly follows it, as the next verse explains this.

Proverbs 23:14

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 23:15

In the good success of my counsels, and in thy piety and happiness, which is as truly desirable and pleasant to me as my own.

Proverbs 23:16

I shall rejoice not only in show and profession, but inwardly, and with all my soul.

Proverbs 23:17

**Let not thine heart envy sinners;** let not the consideration of their present impunity and prosperity stir thee up, either to envy them, or to approve and imitate their evil courses.

**Be thou in the fear of the Lord;** reverence the presence of the Divine Majesty, and dread his power and justice, and those judgments which he hath prepared for sinners, and thou wilt see no cause to envy, but rather to pity them.

**All the day long;** not only when thou art in trouble, but in all times and conditions.

Proverbs 23:18

**An end;** an expected and happy end for such as fear God, which was required, Pro\_23:17. Or,

**a reward,** as this Hebrew word is rendered, Pro\_24:20.

**Thine expectation shall not be cut off;** thou shalt certainly enjoy that good which thou expectest, as the wicked shall lose that happiness which they enjoy.

Proverbs 23:19

**Be wise;** rest not in hearing, but see that thou growest wiser and better by it.

**Guide thine heart;** order the whole course of thine affections and actions.

**In the way;** in God's way, oft called the way, as hath been observed before.

Proverbs 23:20

Avoid their conversation and company, lest thou be either infected or injured by them.

Proverbs 23:21

**Drowsiness;** immoderate sleep and idleness, which is a ready a way to poverty as gluttony or drunkenness is.

Proverbs 23:22

**That begat thee;** and therefore desires and seeks thy good in all his counsels.

**When she is old;** when the infirmity of age is added to that of her sex, which is apt to breed contempt.

Proverbs 23:23

**Buy the truth;** purchase it upon any terms, spare no pains nor cost to get it. *The truth* ; the true and saving knowledge of God's mind and will concerning your salvation, and the way that leads to it.

**Sell it not;** do not forget it nor forsake it for any worldly advantages, as ungodly men frequently do.

**Understanding;** whereby you may love and practise the truth known and received.

Proverbs 23:24

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 23:25

**Thy father and thy mother shall be glad;** he repeateth this again, as a powerful argument to prevail with all children that are not void of natural affection, to labour to be wise and good, that so they may glad the hearts of their parents, to whom they have such high and indelible obligations.

**She that bare thee** with so great pain and hazard, and brought thee up with such tender care, whom thou canst not better requite.



Proverbs 23:26

**Give me thine heart;** receive my counsels with thy whole heart. Solomon speaking in God's name and cause, requires the heart to be given to him.

**Let thine eyes observe,** let thy mind seriously and practically consider, my ways; either,

1. The ways in which I have walked, my evil practices; take warning by my sad example. Or,
2. The ways which I prescribe to you; as the apostles called the gospel which they preached their gospel, 1Th\_1:5 2Th\_2:8.

Proverbs 23:27

**A deep ditch;** in which a man is in evident danger of perdition, and out of which it is exceeding difficult to escape.

Proverbs 23:28

**Lieth in wait as for a prey;** watching all opportunities of insnaring young men to their destruction.

**Increaseth the transgressors among men;** she is the cause of innumerable sins against God, and against the marriage-bed, against the soul and body too, and by her wicked example and arts involveth many persons in the guilt of her sins.

Proverbs 23:29

From the sin of lust he proceeds to that of drunkenness, which doth frequently accompany it.

**Babbling** the sin of much and impertinent talking; or, *tumultuous noise or clamour* , which is usual among drunkards. See Pro\_20:1.

**Without cause;** upon every slight occasion, which men inflamed with wine are very apt to take.

Proverbs 23:30

Either mixed with water, or with other ingredients, to make it strong and delicious. Heb. *mixture* ; mixed drinks of several sorts suited to their palates.

Proverbs 23:31

**Look not thou upon the wine earnestly**, so as to inflame thine appetite towards it; in which sense men are forbidden to look upon a woman, Job\_31:1 Mat\_5:28.

**When it is red**; which was the colour of the best wines in that country, which therefore are called blood, Gen\_49:11 Deu\_32:14; and such were used by them in the passover.

**When it moveth itself aright**; when it sparkleth and frisketh, and seems to smile upon a man.

Proverbs 23:32

It hurts the body in many respects, impairs the rigour of the mind, wastes the estate and reputation, wounds the conscience, and, without repentance, will destroy the soul.

Proverbs 23:33

**Behold**, with evil intent, or lustfully, which is the effect of drinking much wine, as is noted in Scripture, Gen\_19:31, **35 Ho 4:18**, and other authors.

**Thine heart shall utter perverse things**; thine heart, which, when thou hadst the use of thy wit, concealed, will then discover its wickedness by filthy and perverse speeches.

Proverbs 23:34

**That lieth down to sleep**, of which that word is frequently used, **in the midst of the sea**; in a ship in the midst of the sea. This phrase notes the temper and condition of the drunkard, the giddiness of his brain, the unquietness of his mind, and especially his extreme danger joined with great security.

**The top of a mast**; the worst part of the ship, both for its perpetual tossings, and for the hazard of him that sleeps on it.

Proverbs 23:35

**They have stricken me**; I cannot deny that I exposed myself by my drunkenness to manifold abuses and injuries.

**I was not sick**; I was not then sensible of it, neither do I now find any great hurt by it; it was but the effect of a present frolic, at which I have no cause to be much troubled.

**When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again;** at present I find some inconvenience, and my condition requires sleep to settle myself, and when I am composed and refreshed, I purpose to return to my former course. But that which Solomon here expresseth, seems rather to be the language of their hearts or lives than of their tongues. Compare Pro\_1:11.

## **Proverbs 24:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 24

Their company or manner of life.

Proverbs 24:2

**Studieth destruction;** how they may oppress and destroy others, which yet at last falls upon their own heads.

Proverbs 24:3

There is no need that thou shouldst raise thyself and family by ruining others, as the manner of wicked men is, which thou mayst more easily and effectually do by wisdom, and the fear of God.

Proverbs 24:4

**Knowledge;** which in Scripture phrase includes the love and practice of that which we know.

Proverbs 24:5

**Is strong;** is courageous and resolute, and able by wisdom to do greater things than others can accomplish by their own strength.

Proverbs 24:6

War is better managed by wisdom than by strength. So this proves what he said in the last verse.

Proverbs 24:7

**Wisdom is too high for a fool;** either,

1. Really, it is above his reach or capacity. Or,
2. In his opinion; he judgeth it too hard for him, he despairs of attaining it, he pretends the impossibility of it, because he will not put himself to the charge or trouble of getting it; as, on the contrary, *wisdom* is said to be easy *to him that understandeth* , Pro\_14:6, because he seriously giveth his mind to it, and therefore easily and certainly attains to it.

**For a fool;** for a wilful fool, or a wicked man, whose lusts enfeeble and darken his mind, and make it incapable of wisdom.

**He openeth not his mouth in the gate;** either,

1. He can say nothing for himself when he is accused before the magistrate, for which he gives frequent occasion. Or,
2. He knows not how to speak acceptably and profitably in the public assembly among wise men.

Proverbs 24:8

Heb. *a master of mischief* . The sense is, Though he cover his wicked devices with fair pretences, and would be better esteemed, yet he shall be noted and branded with that infamy which is due to him.

Proverbs 24:9

**The thought of foolishness is sin;** the very inward thought or contrivance of evil, of which he spake Pro\_24:8, even before it break forth into action, it is a sin in God's sight, and it is hateful to God. Or

**foolishness** is put for foolish or wicked men, by comparing this with the next clause where the scorner is opposed to it. So the sense is, All the thoughts of wicked men are only evil, and that continually, as is said of man in his corrupt estate, Gen\_6:5, and therefore abominable to God.

**The scorner;** he who not only deviseth and practiseth wickedness, but obstinately persists in it, and rejects all admonitions against it.

**Is an abomination to men;** is abominable not only to God, as all sinners are, but to all sober men.

Proverbs 24:10

**If thou faint;** if thou art impatient, and unable to bear sufferings; if thy resolution flag, and thou givest way to despondency or dejection of mind. *Is small* , Heb. *is narrow* ; it lives in a little compass; it is as strait as thy condition is; for there is an elegant allusion in the Hebrew words. The sense is, This is a sign that thou hast but little Christian strength or courage, for that is best known by adversity.

Proverbs 24:11

**To deliver them**, when it is in thy power to do it lawfully.

**Drawn unto death**, to wit, unjustly, or by the violence of lawless men.

**That are ready to be slain**; that are in present danger of death or destruction.

Proverbs 24:12

**We knew it not**; I was ignorant either of his innocency, or of his extreme danger, or of my power to relieve him.

**Consider it**; that this is only a frivolous excuse, and that the true reason of thy neglect was thy want of true love to thy brother, whose life thou wast by the law of God and of nature obliged to preserve, and thy sinful self-love, and a carnal fear of some mischief or trouble which might befall thee in the discharge of thy duty.

**He that keepeth thy soul**; God, who is the preserver of men, Job\_7:20, who daily doth, and who only can, keep thee both in and from the greatest dangers. And this favour of God may be here mentioned, partly, as a strong obligation upon him to preserve him who is made after God's image, and whom God hath commanded him to love and preserve; partly, as an encouragement to the performance of his duty herein from the consideration of God's special care and watchfulness over those that do their duty; and partly, to intimate to them the danger of the neglect of this duty, whereby they will forfeit God's protection over themselves, and expose themselves to manifold dangers and calamities. Or, as others render it, and as the Hebrew verb is frequently used, *he that observeth thy soul*, that seeth all the secret thoughts and inward motions of the heart; which exposition is favoured both by the following words, doth not he know it? which agrees better to God's observing than to his preserving a man's soul; and by the former clause, to which this translation doth more exactly answer, the same thing being here repeated in other words, after the manner of these sacred writers.

**Shall not he render to every man according to his works?** God will certainly deal with thee as thou hast dealt with him, either

rewarding thy performance of this duty, or punishing thy neglect of it.

Proverbs 24:13

This is not a command, but a concession, and is here expressed only to illustrate the following verse. Honey in those parts was excellent, and a usual and an acceptable food. See Deu\_8:8 Jud\_14:18 1Sa\_14:25.

Proverbs 24:14

**When thou hast found it;** whereby he implies that there is indeed some difficulty and trouble in the pursuit of wisdom, but that it is abundantly compensated with the sweetness and advantage of it when a man arrives at it.

**Then there shall be a reward,** Heb. *and* or *also there is a reward*. It is not only as good as honey, sweet for the present, but it is infinitely better, bringing a sure and everlasting reward with it.

Proverbs 24:15

**Lay not wait;** do him no injury, either by subtle and secret devices, or, as it follows, by manifest violence.

**Against the dwelling of the righteous;** against his person, or family, or possession.

Proverbs 24:16

**Falleth;** either,

1. Into sin. Or, rather,

2. Into calamities, of which he evidently speaks, both in the foregoing verse, and in the opposite and following branch of this verse, and so this word is used in the next verse, and Psa\_37:24 Isa\_24:20 Jer\_25:27 Amo\_8:14 Mic\_7:8, &c. And so this is fitly alleged as a just reason to dissuade wicked men from their unjust attempts against righteous men, because they should not succeed in them; and although they might by God's permission bring them into some distress for a time, yet God would deliver them out of their hands, and they should be disappointed of their hopes.

**Seven times,** i.e. frequently.

**Into mischief;** into unavoidable and irrecoverable destruction, oftentimes in this life, and infallibly in the next.

Proverbs 24:17

**Falleth**, to wit, into mischief, as in the former verse. Please not thyself in his destruction; which plainly shows that the love of our enemies is a precept of the old law as well as of the gospel. See Exo\_23:4,5.

Proverbs 24:18

Understand, *upon thee* , which is implied in the Hebrew phrase, such defects being usual in that concise language, Psa\_84:11 Pro\_19:1, and oft elsewhere. This consideration strikes at the root of that sinful and inhuman disposition, which is an expectation of safety or advantage to himself by his enemy's downfall, which, saith he, by this very mean thou shalt lose, for thine enemy shall be raised, and thy danger greatly increased, by thy provoking both God and him against thee.

Proverbs 24:19

**Fret not thyself**; which translation of the word is confirmed by the parallel word in the following clause.

**Because of evil men**; for their present impunity and good success.

Proverbs 24:20

**There shall be no reward to the evil man**; all his hopes and happiness shall quickly and eternally perish, and he shall have the share in those solid felicities and blessed recompences of a better life which thou shalt enjoy; therefore thou hast no reason to envy him.

**The candle of the wicked shall be put out**; all their comfort and glory shall cease.

Proverbs 24:21

**Fear thou the Lord and the king**; honour and obey both God and the king, and all in authority. He puts God before the king, because God is to be served in the first place, and our obedience is to be given, to kings only in subordination to God, and not in those things which are contrary to the will and command of God, as is manifest both from plain Scripture, as Act\_5:29, and from the judgment and practice of wise and sober heathens.

**Meddle not with them**, Heb. *mix not thyself with them* , either in their counsels and practices, or in familiar conversation, that are

given to change; that love or use changes; that are unstable in their obedience to God or to the king, and are prone to rebellion against either of them. Those men that wickedly forsake God, and break his laws, are said to change their God, Jer\_2:11, and to

**change God's judgments and ordinances,** Isa\_24:5 Eze\_5:6.

Proverbs 24:22

**Who knoweth?** who can conceive how sore and sudden it will be?

**The ruin of them both;** of them that fear not God, and of them that fear not the king, for they have two potent and terrible enemies; and therefore if they will not obey them out of conscience, as their duty binds them, yet they should do it at least for their own sakes, and for fear of those severe punishments which they will certainly inflict upon rebels.

Proverbs 24:23

**These things also,** these proverbs or counsels here following to the end of the chapter, no less than those hitherto mentioned,

**belong to the wise;** are worthy of the consideration, and fit for the use, of them who are or would be wise; for only such are capable of understanding and improving these proverbs, as was noted, Pro\_1:5-7, and elsewhere. To have respect of persons in judgment; for judges to determine controversies partially, according to the quality of the persons, and not according to the merits of the cause.

Proverbs 24:24

**He that saith,** to wit, publicly, and in judgment, as he now said, and as appears by the publicness of the curse following upon it, for people or nations do neither observe nor hate every man who saith thus privately.

**Thou art righteous,** that justify wicked men in their unrighteous courses.

**Nations shall abhor him,** partly for the grossness and odiousness of the crime, and partly for the great and general mischief which such practices bring to civil societies.



Proverbs 24:25

**That rebuke him;** that publicly and judicially rebuke and condemn the wicked.

**Delight;** the peace of a good conscience, and the comfort of a good name.

**A good blessing;** which the people shall wish, and by their prayers obtain, from God for them; which is fitly opposed to *the people's curse* in the last verse.

Proverbs 24:26

**Every man shall kiss his lips,** shall highly respect and love him, of which kissing was a sign,

**that giveth a right answer;** who being called to speak, either as a judge, or witness, or otherwise, in weighty matters, speaks pertinently, and plainly, and truly, to the conviction and satisfaction of the hearers.

Proverbs 24:27

This is a domestical precept, requiring both industry and prudence in the management of a man's concerns, that he take care in the first place to furnish himself with cattle and the fruits of the field, which are necessary for his subsistence, and after that he may procure such things as are for ornament and comfort, such as the building of a convenient house is.

Proverbs 24:28

**Be not a witness against thy neighbour,** either in judgment or in private conversation, without cause; rashly or falsely, without just and sufficient cause.

**Deceive not** neither thy neighbour, to whom thou hast made a show of friendship, nor the judge, nor any other bearers, with false information. Or this clause forbids flattering him to his face, as the former forbids slandering him behind his back.

Proverbs 24:29

Say not within thyself; give not way to any such thoughts or passions.

**I will render to the man according to his work;** I will repay him all his calumnies and injuries.

Proverbs 24:30

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 24:31

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 24:32

I learned wisdom by his folly, and by his gross idleness was provoked to greater care and diligence.

Proverbs 24:33

See this and the following verse in Pro\_6:10,**11**.

Proverbs 24:34

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 25:1 **PROVERBS Chapters 25**

Observations about kings, Pro\_25:1-7. A caution against contentions, Pro\_25:8; against revealing of secrets, Pro\_25:9. The reason of this caution, Pro\_25:10; with divers other rules, Pro\_25:11-28.

**These**, which are contained in this and the following chapters.

**The men of Hezekiah;** certain persons appointed by Hezekiah for that work, whether prophets, as Isaiah, Hosea, or Micah, who lived in his days, or some others, it is neither evident nor material. Most of them are political precepts, and such as in a special manner concerned Hezekiah and other princes to know, for the conduct of their house and kingdom.

**Copied out;** either out of other books or writings of Solomon, concerning natural or civil things, of which we read 1Ki\_4:32; or out of the historical records which were then extant concerning Solomon's speeches and actions in the history of the kings of Judah, which is oft mentioned in Holy Scripture.

Proverbs 25:2

**It is the glory of God;** it is agreeable to the nature and highly conducing to the honour of God, because it is a testimony of his infinite wisdom and knowledge, of his absolute power and sovereignty, and of his other incomprehensible perfections.

**To conceal a thing;** to keep his counsels and the reasons of his actions in his own breast, that he needs not to impart them to any

other for their advice and assistance, as being self-sufficient both for the contrivance and execution of whatsoever pleaseth him, and accountable to none for any of his matters.

**But the honour of kings is;** but kings must not affect to be like God in this respect, because they are creatures, and therefore ignorant and insufficient, and accountable to a higher authority;

**to search out a matter;** in the conduct of their great affairs, not to lean to their own understandings, nor to be wedded to their own wills, but to communicate their counsels to others, that so they may search and find out the true and right way, and to be ready to give a satisfactory account of the justice and reasonableness of them, as occasion shall require.

Proverbs 25:3

**The heaven for height, and the earth for depth;** as no man upon earth can exactly discover the height of heaven, or the depth of earth, or discern what is contained in them.

**The heart of kings is unsearchable;** though wise kings will search out other men and things, yet their inward thoughts and purposes are hardly discoverable, partly because every man's heart lies out of the sight of others, and partly because it is the practice of kings industriously to conceal their intentions.

Proverbs 25:4

Then, and not till then, it is fit for that use.

Proverbs 25:5

**From before the king;** from his court and councils.

**Shall be established,** by removing them who by their wicked counsels and practices provoked God's displeasure against the king, and blasted his reputation, and alienated the hearts of his people from him.

**Established in righteousness,** by such impartial execution of justice.

Proverbs 25:6

**Put not forth thyself,** Heb. *Do not magnify or glorify thyself*, by vaunting speech or carriage, but, which is implied, carry thyself

humbly and modestly, which is most pleasing to kings, and most becoming and safe for them.

**Stand not in the place of great men;** do not affect nor use frequent and familiar society with greater persons than thyself, whereby thou mayst easily involve thyself in much guilt, and expose thyself to envy or contempt, and to many other inconveniences.

Proverbs 25:7

**For better it is,** it is more for thy credit and comfort,

**that it be said unto thee,** by some public officer, or by the king himself. *Whom thine eyes have seen* ; into whose presence and acquaintance thou hast so boldly intruded thyself, who as before he observed thy impudence, so now he sees and suffers this public disgrace to be cast upon thee.

Proverbs 25:8

**Go not forth hastily,** without necessary cause and due consideration, to strive, either judicially or otherwise.

**Put thee to shame,** for thy folly in undertaking what thou wast not able to accomplish, and for thy injustice in charging him wrongfully.

Proverbs 25:9

**Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself;** if thou hast any quarrel with him, first try to compose it by private discourse with him. Compare Mat\_5:25 **18:15** Luk\_12:58.

**Discover not a secret;** any secret. Let no heat of contention provoke thee to divulge any of his secret counsels committed to thy trust, or to reproach him with any of his secret faults, as is usual in lawsuits and other contentions. Or, *the secret* ; any secret difference between thee and him, which therefore is fittest to be ended secretly between you, and not to be imparted to any other.

Proverbs 25:10

**Put thee to shame;** reproach thee for thy gross violation of the laws of prudence, and justice, and charity, and friendship therein.

**And thine infamy turn not away;** and that disgrace which thou didst design against another fall and be fastened upon thyself.

Proverbs 25:11

**A word fitly spoken**, for the matter, and season, and other circumstances of it,

**is like apples of gold in pictures of silver**, which it seems was usual in those times, and was grateful to the eye for the beauty and variety both of the colours and figures, the golden apples appearing through net-work of silver, or being engraven or portrayed upon tablets of silver.

Proverbs 25:12

**As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold**; highly acceptable, and a great ornament, and not an offence and dishonour, as fools esteem it;

**so is a wise reprovor**, that reproves an offender faithfully; yet prudently, in the fittest manner and season.

**Upon an obedient ear**; to a man that hearkens to it, and is instructed and reformed by it.

Proverbs 25:13

**As the cold of snow**; either,

1. As drink cooled with ice or snow, as was and is usual in hot countries. Or,
2. As a cool air, such as is in snowy seasons. Or,
3. As drink which is as cold as snow.

**He refresheth the soul of his masters**, with a true account and speedy despatch of those important affairs which were committed to him.

Proverbs 25:14

**Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift**, pretending that he hath given, or promising that he will give, a man those gifts, which he neither hath given, nor intendeth to give him,

**is like clouds and wind without rain**; like empty clouds carried about with wind, and not affording that rain which by their appearance they promise.

Proverbs 25:15

**By long forbearing**, by patient submission and expectation,

**is a prince persuaded**, or *pacified* , whereas his rage is increased by opposition. Compare Ecc\_10:4.

**A soft tongue**, a mild and humble answer,

**breaketh the bone**; softeneth a heart which is as hard as bone or stone. He alludes to those oils which sink through the flesh to the very bone. See Psa\_109:18.

Proverbs 25:16

**Honey** in those parts was oft found in woods or fields, as Jud\_14:8, &c.; 1Sa\_14:25. By *honey* he understands, not only all delicious meats, but all present and worldly delights, which we are here taught to use with moderation. Honey excessively taken disposeth a man to vomiting.

Proverbs 25:17

**Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house**, visit him not too frequently nor unseasonably, lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee, as men are apt to loathe those meats of which they surfeit, as was now observed, Pro\_25:16.

Proverbs 25:18

Is as cruel and pernicious to him as any instrument of death. The design of the proverb is to show the wickedness of slander, and that a false witness is in some respect as bad as a murderer.

Proverbs 25:19

It is not only deceitful, but hurtful, as a broken tooth though it make show of helping, yet is not only unhelpful to a man for chewing his meat, but also troublesome and painful; and as a foot out of joint doth not help, but hinder and pain, him that attempts to walk upon it.

Proverbs 25:20

**In cold weather**, when it is most seasonable and necessary.

**As vinegar upon nitre**, which dissolves the nitre, and makes it useless and ineffectual.

**So is he**, he is no less absurd and impertinent,

**that singeth songs to an heavy heart**; whose grief is not relieved, but increased by it, as common experience showeth, and divers learned authors have observed.

Proverbs 25:21

**By bread and water** he understands all things necessary for his subsistence.

Proverbs 25:22

**For**, understand, in so doing, which words are expressed Rom\_12:20, where this text is quoted,

**thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head;** either,

1. In a bad sense, thou shalt hereby aggravate his sin, and occasion a more speedy and grievous vengeance from God, which, like fire from heaven, shall fall upon his head and consume him. Not that he persuades him to do a kindness with an evil intent, with an expectation, or desire, or design of bringing God's wrath upon him; but only he foretells what would happen, and dissuades him from taking vengeance, and provokes him to kindness instead of it, because vengeance is God's peculiar work, which he will certainly inflict upon such persons; which argument is used to that very purpose by St. Paul, Rom\_12:19. Or,

2. In a good sense, thou shalt melt him into repentance, and inflame him with love and kindness to thee for so unexpected and undeserved a favour; he shall be as heartily grieved and tormented with the thoughts of his vile and wicked carriage to thee, as a man would be that had burning coals of fire heaped upon his head. But if these coals of fire do not melt him, but still he hardens his heart against thee, they will consume him. Thus either by the one or by the other way thou shalt be secured and delivered from him. The metaphor may seem to be taken from founders, who melt the hardest metals by heaping coals of fire upon them. And *the head* may be here mentioned rather than any other part, because in Scripture phrase both blessings and curses are said to fall upon men's heads, i.e. upon them, heads being frequently put for persons.

**The Lord shall reward thee;** thy charity to him shall be fully recompensed to thee, if not by him, yet by God, which is far better.

Proverbs 25:23

**An angry countenance** in the hearer, who by his countenance showeth his dislike of such persons and practices.

**A backbiting tongue**, Heb. *a secret tongue* , which privily slandereth his neighbour, as it is expressed, Psa\_101:5, and as the manner of backbiters is. But this verse is otherwise rendered in the margin, and by divers others, *the north wind bringeth forth* (as this verb properly and most frequently signifies, and as it is rendered by all the ancient interpreters, and by many others) *rain* (which it doth in Judea, because the sea lies northward as well as westward from it, as also in Africa, as Aristotle observes, though it drive away rain in countries of another situation):

**so doth a backbiting tongue** (cause)

**an angry countenance**; it causeth much anger and mischief; both to the person slandered, and to the slanderer, and to other persons who may be concerned with or for either of them, as is manifest from common experience.

Proverbs 25:24

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 25:25

Because it comes thither more rarely and difficultly after it hath been long expected and earnestly desired; all which circumstances make it more acceptable.

Proverbs 25:26

**Falling down**; either,

1. Into sin. So the sense is, When a just man is either allured or terrified into any sinful practice before wicked men, or into any base and servile compliance with their lusts, he who by his excellent counsels was like a fountain or *well of life* , as his mouth is called, Pro\_10:11, sending forth refreshing streams for the benefit of many, is now corrupted and rendered unserviceable. Or rather,

2. Into misery, of which kind of falling this word is constantly used, and never to my remembrance of falling into sin. And so the sense is this, When righteous men are oppressed and devoured by the wicked, the state of that commonwealth is as deplorable, as if the public fountains, from whence all the people fetch their water, were corrupted, and it is a sign that the fountains of justice are poisoned.



Proverbs 25:27

**Not good**, to wit, for the health of the body.

**For men**; which words are easily understood, both out of the foregoing clause, where the honey is supposed to be eaten by men, and out of the following words, which are evidently meant of them.

**To search their own glory**; industriously to seek for honour and applause from men.

**Is not glory**; is not only sinful, but shameful also, and a sign of a vain and mean spirit. The negative particle *not* is here understood out of the former part of the verse, as it is Psa\_1:5 **9:18**.

Proverbs 25:28

**Over his own spirit**; over his passions, and especially his anger, Which is signified by this word, Pro\_16:2 Ecc\_10:4.

**Is like a city that is broken down, and without walls**; exposeth himself to manifold dangers and mischiefs.

## **Proverbs 26:1 PROVERBS CHAPTER 26**

Rules how to carry it towards fools, Pro\_26:1-12. The slothful man described, Pro\_26:13-16. The character of a contentious man, and of a busybody, and tale-bearer, Pro\_26:17-23. The evil of hypocrisy and lying, Pro\_26:24-28.

**As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest**; unbecoming and unseasonable.

**So honour is not seemly for a fool**, because he neither deserves it, nor knows how to use it, but his folly is both increased and publicly manifested by it.

Proverbs 26:2

**By wandering** from place to place; by its perpetual restlessness it secures itself from the fowler, that he cannot shoot at it, nor spread his net over it.

**Shall not come**, to wit, upon the innocent person, but he shall escape from it like a bird, &c.

Proverbs 26:3

**A bridle** was very proper and usual for an ass, when they rode upon it, (as the Jews most commonly did,) though not to restrain him from running away, which is the principal use of it in horses, yet that the rider might rule and guide him, which was very necessary for that stupid creature. Although the ancient interpreters render it a *goad*, or spur, or something of the like nature and use.

**A rod for the fool's back;** which is most proper and necessary for him. Not words, but blows, must make him better.

Proverbs 26:4

How can these contrary rules be reconciled, *answer him not*, and *answer him*?

**Ans.** Easily, by considering the difference of persons, and times, and places, and other circumstances, and of the manner of answering. And such seemingly contradictory precepts are not only used by, but are esteemed elegant in, other authors.

**Answer him not,** when he is incorrigible, or when he is inflamed with passion or wine, &c., or when it is not necessary, nor likely to do him good.

**Answer him,** when he is capable of receiving good by it, or when it is necessary for the glory of God, or for the discharge of a man's duty, or for the good of others.

**According to his folly;** so as to imitate his folly, by such passionate, or reproachful, or foolish speeches as he useth to thee.

**Be like unto him;** show thyself to be as great a fool as he.

Proverbs 26:5

**According to his folly;** so as his folly needs and requires, convincing him strongly, reproving him sharply, exposing him to just shame, and correcting him with a rod, when he deserves it, and thou hast a just power to use it.

**Lest he be wise in his own conceit;** lest thy silence make him arrogant and presumptuous, as if his words were unanswerable.

Proverbs 26:6

**He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool**, he that employeth a fool upon any important errand or business which is too hard for him,

**cutteth off the feet**, to wit, of his messenger; he bids one go that wants legs; he sends one who wants that discretion, which is as necessary for that employment as legs are for going.

**Drinketh damage**; he bringeth upon himself abundance of loss and mischief, not only spoiling that business about which he sends him, but making himself contemptible to the person to whom he sends him, and to others with him, as if he had not common prudence to choose a fit messenger, and giving occasion, by the folly of his messenger, to further misunderstandings, and jealousies, and inconveniences. For the phrase, we may observe that drinking in Scripture frequently notes the plentiful doing or receiving of any thing, as they who multiply sins are said to drink iniquity like water, Job\_15:16 **34:7**; and they who are greatly afflicted are commonly said to drink the cup.

Proverbs 26:7

**The legs of the lame are not equal**, Heb. As (which note of similitude is plainly understood from the particle so in the following clause) *the legs of the lame are lifted up* , to wit, in going, or rather in dancing, which is done with great inequality and uncomeliness.

**So is a parable in the mouth of fools**; no less absurd and indecent are wise and pious speeches from a foolish and ungodly man, whose actions grossly contradict them, whereby he makes them contemptible, and himself ridiculous.

Proverbs 26:8

**As he that bindeth a stone in a sling**; whereby he hinders his own design of throwing the stone out of it; or, who fastens it there only for a season, that he may speedily and violently throw it away. Or, as it is rendered in our margin, and by many others, *As he that putteth a precious stone* (Heb. *a stone* , which is oft emphatically used for a precious stone, both in Scripture, as Exo\_39:10 1Ch\_29:8, and elsewhere, and also in other authors) *in an heap of stones* , where it is obscured and lost.

**So is he that giveth honour to a fool;** no less absurd is he that giveth to a fool that honour and praise which he is not capable either of receiving, or retaining, or using aright, but it is quite wasted upon him, and doth him more hurt than good.

Proverbs 26:9

*As a thorn is in a drunkard 's hand,* which he cannot hold and manage cautiously, but employeth to his own and others' hurt,

**so is a parable in the mouth of fools;** as improper and unprofitable, and, by accident, hurtful to himself and others. **See Poole "Pro\_26:7"**.

Proverbs 26:10

God, who is oft called

**great,** as Psa\_86:10 **135:5,** &c., and is described by the name of

**the Most High,** as Psa\_9:2 **21:7,** &c., who created all things, and therefore observeth and governeth all men and things, will certainly give that recompence which is meet for and deserved by *fools and transgressors* , i.e. by such as sin either through ignorance and heedlessness, or wilfully and wickedly. Or, as it is the margin, *A great man* (a prince or potentate, who are called by this title, Est\_1:8 Dan\_1:3, &c.) *grieveth* (as this word is used, Isa\_51:9 **53:5,** and elsewhere) all, (to wit, all that are subject to him, or all that stand in his way) he hireth (as this word most commonly signifies) the fools, he hireth also transgressors. So the sense is, It is the manner of many princes to vex and oppress their subjects, which because they cannot do by themselves alone, they hire others, both fools, who do not know or consider what they do, and transgressors, who are ready to execute all their commands, right or wrong, that they may be their instruments in that work.

Proverbs 26:11

**As a dog returneth to his vomit,** to lick up that which he had lately vomited, forgetting how burdensome and vexatious it was to him,

**so a fool returneth to his folly;** such like is the impudence and madness of sinners, who having smarted for their sins, and been forced to forsake them for a time, do afterwards return to the commission of them.

Proverbs 26:12

**A man wise in his own conceit;** who, being a fool, thinks himself wise, and therefore scorneth the counsels of others.

**There is more hope of a fool;** of doing good to one who is a fool, and sensible of his folly, and ready to receive instruction.

Proverbs 26:13

To excuse his idleness, and keeping himself at home. **See Poole** "Pro\_22:13".

Proverbs 26:14

**Turneth upon his hinges;** moving hither and thither upon them, but not removing one jot from its place.

Proverbs 26:15

He will not take the least pains for the most necessary things.

Proverbs 26:16

**Is wiser in his own conceit,** because by his idleness he avoids those troubles and dangers to which other men by their activity expose themselves, forgetting in the mean thee what reproach and loss, and how much greater mischiefs, both here and hereafter, are brought upon him by his slothfulness.

**That can render a reason,** to wit, a satisfactory reason, of all their actions, i.e. who are truly wise men.

Proverbs 26:17

**He that passeth by;** who is going upon the way, and about his business. But this word is by some referred to the last clause, is like

**one that taketh a dog by the ears as he is passing by him,** without any thought of doing him harm; which agrees very well both with the order of the words in the Hebrew text, and with the matter of the other clause, to which this similitude is referred.

**Belonging not to him;** in which he is not concerned, nor any way obliged to meddle.

**Is like one that taketh a dog by the ears;** exposeth himself to great and needless hazards, as a man that causelessly provoketh a mastiff dog against himself.

Proverbs 26:18

**As a madman**, *as one that feigneth himself mad* , that under that pretence he may do mischief with impunity,

**who casteth fire-brands**, to hurt his neighbour's person, or to consume his house or goods.

**Death;** any instruments of death.

Proverbs 26:19

That wrongs him under a false pretence of kindness and familiarity.

Proverbs 26:20

**Tale-bearer**, to carry such reports from one to another as may provoke them to mutual rage and strife.

Proverbs 26:21

Heb. *A man of contentions* , that loveth and giveth him self up to contentions.

Proverbs 26:22

This was delivered before, Pro\_18:8, and is here repeated, as being a point of great concernment to the peace and welfare of all societies, and fit to be oft and earnestly pressed upon the consciences of men, because of their great and general proneness to this sin.

Proverbs 26:23

**Burning;** either,

1. With love. Words delivered with show of true and fervent affection. Or rather,

2. With malice or hatred. A slanderous or evil tongue; for this word is constantly used in a bad sense, and notes the heat of rage and persecution.

**Like a potsherd covered with silver dross;** such a tongue and heart are of no real worth, although sometimes they make a show of it, as dross doth of silver.

Proverbs 26:24

**Dissembleth, or, carrieth himself like another man;** pretends love and kindness; which sense seems to agree best both with the next clause of this verse, and with the two following verses,

Proverbs 26:25

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 26:26

**Covered by deceit;** with false professions of love. Showed before the whole congregation; instead of that secrecy and impunity, which by this art he designed and promised to himself, he shall be brought to public shame and punishment.

Proverbs 26:27

**Whoso diggeth a pit,** that another may fall into it. It is a metaphor from hunters, who used to dig deep pits, and then to cover them slightly with earth, that wild beasts passing that way might fall into them, and sometimes in the heat of pursuit fell into them themselves.

**That rolleth a stone,** to wit, up the hill, with design to do mischief to some person or thing with it.

Proverbs 26:28

**Hateth those that are afflicted by it,** because by his calumnies he hath made them his enemies.

**A flattering mouth;** which, though it be more smooth and plausible than a slandering mouth, yet is in truth no less pernicious, betraying others either to sin, or to danger and mischief.

## **Proverbs 27:1 PROVERBS CHAPTER 27**

Counsel against self-conceitedness, Pro\_27:1,2. The evil effects of envy, Pro\_27:4. The praises of a faithful friend, Pro\_27:5-10. The different fruits of prudence and folly, Pro\_27:11,12. Sundry rules and cautions, Pro\_27:13-21.

**Of tomorrow;** of any good thing which thou purposeth to do or hopest to receive to-morrow, or hereafter; the thee being here put metonymically for things done or had in the thee, as Deu\_4:32 Ecc\_2:23. The same caution is given Jam\_4:13, &c.

**What a day may bring forth;** what may happen in the space of one day, which may hinder thy designs or expectations. The day is said to bring forth what God by his almighty power and providence doth either cause or suffer to be brought forth or done in it.

Proverbs 27:2

Except it be really necessary, either for thy own just vindication, or for the honour of God, or for the edification of others, in which cases this hath been allowed and practised by wise and virtuous men, as particularly by St. Paul, 2Co\_11:12.

Proverbs 27:3

**Heavier;** more grievous and intolerable, as being without cause, without measure, and without end.

Proverbs 27:4

Envy is worse than both of them, partly, because it is more unjust and unreasonable, as not caused by any provocation, as wrath and anger are, but only proceeding from a malignity of mind, whereby a man is grieved for another man's happiness, in which he should rejoice; partly, because it is more deeply rooted and implacable, whereas the other passions are commonly allayed; and partly, because it is more secret and undiscernible, and therefore the mischievous effects of it are hardly avoidable; whereas wrath and anger discover themselves, and so forewarn and forearm a man against the danger.

Proverbs 27:5

**Open rebuke,** Heb. *which is manifested or discovered*, either,

1. Publicly and before others, when it is needful; in which case, though it put a man to some shame, yet it doth him good. Or,
2. Privately, and to the offender's time, a plain and downright reproof.

**Better;** more desirable and beneficial.

**Secret love;** which lies hid in the heart, and doth not show itself by friendly actions, and particularly by free and faithful reproof, which is a principal end and benefit of friendship.



Proverbs 27:6

**Faithful are the wounds;** they proceed from an upright, and truly loving, and faithful soul, and really promote the good of the person reprov'd. *The wounds* ; the sharpest reproofs, which for the present wound his spirit and reputation.

**The kisses;** all the fair speeches and outward professions of friendship.

**Are deceitful;** or, *are to be deprecated* ; are perfidious and pernicious, and such things as one may pray to God to be delivered from them. Or, *are forced* , like things which are procured with great difficulty, and many entreaties.

Proverbs 27:7

**The full soul,** a man whose appetite or desire (which is oft expressed in Scripture by the name of soul) is fully satisfied,

**loatheth an honey-comb,** the most delicious meats. The design of this proverb is to show the inconvenience that oftentimes attends upon plenty, and the advantage of poverty, that the rich might learn moderation, and the poor content.

Proverbs 27:8

**That wandereth from her nest;** that flies very much abroad from place to place, whereby she is exposed to all the arts of fowlers, and to birds of prey, from which she is safe whilst she keeps her nest.

**That wandereth from his place;** that through vanity or lightness changeth the place of his abode, or his calling and course of life, the ill effects whereof have been frequently observed and noted, even in vulgar proverbs, as when we say, *A rolling stone gathers no moss* .

Proverbs 27:9

**Rejoice the heart,** by increasing and comforting the spirits. No less grateful and pleasant is the company and conversation of a true friend, in respect of his good and faithful counsel, which comes from his very heart and soul, and contains his most inward and serious thoughts, whereas deceitful persons give such counsels, not as they think to be best, but as most serve their lusts or designs.

Proverbs 27:10

**Thy father's friend**, of whose friendship thou hast had long experience.

**Neither go into thy brother's house**, to wit, for comfort and relief, and so as to forsake or neglect thy friend for him.

**Better is a neighbour**; the friend mentioned in the beginning of the verse, who hath showed himself to be a true and a good neighbour.

**That is near**; either,

1. In place by cohabitation. Or rather,
2. In affection, in which respect God is oft said to be near to the righteous, and far from the wicked.

Proverbs 27:11

For being the father of a wicked son, as if I had either deserved him as a curse from God, or made him so by my example, or by the neglect of his education. See Eze\_16:44 1Th\_3:4.

Proverbs 27:12

This was delivered Pro\_22:3, and is here repeated to enforce the foregoing exhortation, by representing the great advantage of wisdom.

Proverbs 27:13

Possibly this is here repeated as a part of the father's counsel to his son, begun Pro\_27:11, to avoid rash suretiship, to which young men are most prone, and by which they are exposed in the beginning of their days to many sins and miseries, which they carry with them to their graves.

Proverbs 27:14

**He that blesseth his friend**, that saluteth, or praiseth, and applaudeth him to his face, as the manner of flatterers is,

**with a loud voice**, that both he and others may be sure to take notice of it;

**rising early in the morning** to perform this office, to show his great forwardness, and diligence, and zeal in his service, which

was the custom of the Romans afterward, and possibly of some of the Jews at this time;

**it shall be counted a curse to him** his friend will value this kind of blessing no more than a curse, because it plainly discovers a base design, and is a high reflection upon him, as if he either did not understand such gross and palpable flattery, or were so ridiculously vain-glorious as to be pleased with it.

Proverbs 27:15

Are equally troublesome, the first not suffering a man to go abroad with comfort, the latter not permitting him to stay at home with quietness.

Proverbs 27:16

**Whosoever hideth her**, i.e. attempts to smother or bridle her passion, that it may not break forth to her shame, and to his own discomfort and reproach,

**hideth the wind**; undertakes that which is impossible.

**The ointment of his right hand**; which being the great instrument of action, by its much stirring diffuseth the savour of it.

Proverbs 27:17

Iron cutting tools are made bright, and sharp, and fit for use by rubbing them against the file, or some other iron. So a man, who being alone is sad, and dull, and unactive, by the company and conversation of his friend is greatly refreshed, his very wits are sharpened, and his spirit revived, and he is both fitted for and provoked to action.

**The countenance** is here put for the mind or spirit, whose temper or disposition is commonly visible in men's countenances.

Proverbs 27:18

He mentions the fig tree, because they abounded in Canaan, and were more valued and regarded than other trees.

**He that waiteth** on his master, that serves him faithfully, prudently, and diligently,

**shall be honoured**; shall receive that respect and recompence which he deserves.

Proverbs 27:19

The sense is either,

1. As the image of a man's face in the water answers to his natural face who looks into it; or, as in water one man's face is like another's, the difference of men's faces being not there visible: so one man resembles another, either in the temper of his mind or body, in which many men are alike one to another; or in the corruption of his nature, in which all are alike. Or,

2. As a man may see his own face if he look into the water, which is nature's looking-glass, or into any other looking glass; so a man may discern his own heart, if he look into those glasses whereby it discovers itself; if he examine his thoughts and inclinations, together with the general course of his actions. Or,

3. As the face of a man standing by the waters is visible not only to himself, but to others, by the shadow or image of it in the waters; so the heart of a man is in some measure discernible, not only to himself, but to others also, who observe his disposition and carriage.

Proverbs 27:20

**Hell and destruction are never full;** the grave devours all the bodies which are put into it, and is always ready to receive and devour more and more without end.

**The eyes,** i.e. the desires, which work and discover themselves by the eyes, 1Jo\_2:16, and other senses; for otherwise the eyes in themselves are neither capable of satisfaction nor of dissatisfaction.

Proverbs 27:21

**As the fining pot for silver;** is appointed and used for the trial of silver, and the detection and separation of the dross from it.

**So is a man to his praise;** or, *according to his praise* . The sense is, So a man is known by his praises; either,

1. By the quality of those who praise and applaud him; and as they are good or bad, so is he thought to be. Or,

2. By his carriage under praises; as he carries himself either humbly and modestly with thankfulness to God, and a due sense

of his own infirmities, which is the case and temper of a good man; or ambitiously and vain-gloriously, taking to himself the honour which he should give to God, as ungodly men generally do in that case.

Proverbs 27:22

Not a natural, but a moral and wilful fool, who by long continuance in sin is hardened and stupefied, and so incorrigible under all the means of amendment.

Proverbs 27:23

**To know the state of thy flocks;** that thou mayst preserve and improve what thou hast, and take care that thine expenses may not exceed thine incomes.

**Flocks and herds** are here put for all riches and possessions, because anciently they were the chief part of a man's riches.

**Look well,** Heb. *set thine heart* . Trust not wholly to thy servants, as many do, that they may give up themselves wholly to ease and pleasure; but make rise of thine own eyes and reason for the conduct of thine affairs, lest thou come to ruin, as many have done by this very means.

Proverbs 27:24

**Riches;** or, *treasure* . The sense is, What thou dost now possess, or hast laid up, will not last always, but will soon be spent, if thou dost not take care to preserve and improve it.

**The crown;** by which he understands a condition of the greatest honour and plenty. If a man had the wealth of a kingdom, without provident care and due diligence it would quickly be brought to nothing. Hence the greatest kings have minded husbandry, as Solomon, Uzziah, and others.

Proverbs 27:25

**The hay appeareth, and the tender grass showeth itself,** in their proper seasons. These things may be here mentioned, either,

1. As the matter of his diligence. Take care that thy hay and grass may be well managed, and seasonably gathered, for the use of thy cattle. Or rather,

2. As another argument and encouragement to diligence, because God invites thee to it by the plentiful provisions wherewith he hath enriched the earth for thy sake. Thou needest not compass sea and land for them, for God puts them into thy hand, if thou wilt but receive them.

**Herbs of the mountains**, even the most barren parts afford thee their help,

**are gathered**; or, *are to be gathered* , as such passive verbs are oft used; they are ripe and ready for the gathering. So this clause suits best with the former.

Proverbs 27:26

**The lambs are for thy clothing**; by their wool and skins, either used to clothe thyself with or sold to purchase all manner of clothing for thyself and family.

**The goats are the price of the field**; by the sale whereof thou mayst either pay the rent of the field which thou hirest, or purchase fields or lands for thyself. Either *goats* are put for all cattle, or he mentions *goats* , because these might better be spared and sold than sheep, which brought a more certain and constant profit to the owner.

Proverbs 27:27

**Goats' milk enough for thy food**; or, if thou chooseth rather to keep than to sell thy goats, the milk of them will serve thee for food to thyself, and to thy family. In ancient times men used a plain and simple diet, and neither knew nor used that curiosity and luxury in it which after-ages invented.

**For thy maidens**; who are named, because this nourishment was more proper for the weaker sex, whereas men required a stronger diet.

## **Proverbs 28:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 28

The character of the righteous and of the wicked, with the blessed fruits of integrity, and evil effects of sin, Pro\_28:11-12. The evil of concealing and blessedness of confessing sin, Pro\_28:13. The evil of oppression and violence, the benefit of industry and faithfulness, with sundry other observations, Pro\_28:15-28.

**The wicked flee when no man pursueth**, because the conscience of their own guilt puts them into a continual expectation and dread of God's judgments.

**The righteous are bold**; are courageous and resolute, having the witness of a good conscience, and the assurance of Divine favour and protection, and the supports and consolations of the Holy Ghost.

Proverbs 28:2

**Many are the princes thereof**; either,

1. Together, contending for supremacy. Or rather,
2. Successively, as appears from the following clause. Their princes are soon cut off, and other persons, and oftentimes persons of other families, come in their stead, which is justly threatened as a curse, because such frequent changes are seldom for the better, and commonly for the worse, and are frequently attended with blood and slaughter, with the change and subversion of laws, with heavy taxes and charges, with the ruin of many families, and with many other mischiefs.

**By a man of understanding and knowledge**; by a wise and good man; which may be understood either,

1. Collectively, for

**men of understanding**, & c., as it is rendered in the margin. i.e. when the men or people of a land are wise and good. Or rather,

2. Singularly; and that either,

1. Of a wise and righteous prince, who by the good government of himself, and his family, and kingdom, by punishing and preventing the transgressions of the people, turns away God's wrath, and saves himself and people. Or,

2. Of any other man of eminent wisdom or piety, who prevents this judgment, either by his good counsels given to the prince and people, and entertained by them, or by his intercession to God; for God hath sometimes spared a people for the sake of one man, as he did Zoar for Lot, Gen\_19:20,21. and the Israelites for Moses, Psa\_106:23.

**The state thereof shall be prolonged;** the land shall enjoy its former state and tranquillity, and the life of their good prince shall be prolonged.

Proverbs 28:3

When a poor man being advanced into a place of authority, abuseth it to oppress those that are poor and unable to resist him, he is like a violent rain or flood, which washeth away the very seeds which are in the earth, and spoileth the corn and fruits which are upon it. He is the worst of all oppressors, because as he is of a base mind, which also is made much worse by a sudden change and elevation into a high condition; so his own necessities inflame his desires, and make him greedy to take all, yea, even the small, advantages of enriching himself; which the ancients expressed by the similitude of an empty horseleech, which sucketh much more strongly than that which is already filled; and of a dry sponge, which licks up far more water than that which was wet before.

Proverbs 28:4

**They that forsake the law,** that live in the contempt of and disobedience to God's law,

**praise the wicked;** honour their persons, contrary to Psa\_15:4; freely and familiarly associate themselves with them, and approve of their sinful courses; all which proceeds from their great likeness to them.

**Contend with them;** are so far from praising or applauding them, that they severely rebuke them, and to the utmost of their power oppose them in their wicked enterprises.

Proverbs 28:5

**Understand not,** because their minds are naturally blind, and are further blinded by their own prejudices and passions, and by the god of this world, who rules in and over them.

**Judgment,** i.e. what is just and right; what is their duty in all cases and conditions, as *judgment* is frequently understood.

**That seek the Lord,** by diligent study of his word, and by fervent prayers to him for advice. All things which are necessary to be known by them, either for the discharge of all their present duties to God and men, or for their everlasting happiness.



Proverbs 28:6

**Better;** in a much safer and happier condition.

**In his ways,** Heb. *in two ways* ; halting between two ways, pretending to virtue, but practising vice; or covering his wicked designs with good pretences; or sometimes erring on one hand, and sometimes on the other, as wicked men commonly do.

Proverbs 28:7

**Is a wise son;** and consequently a credit and comfort to his father, as hath been oft noted before.

**Is a companion of riotous men;** which is both a manifest violation of God's law, which forbids this society, and is the ready way to a total and final apostacy from God, and from his law.

**Shameth his father,** because he is a foolish son.

Proverbs 28:8

**By usury and unjust gain,** Heb. *by usury and* (or, *or* ) increase, i.e. by any kind of usury, whereby the poor are oppressed, as is implied from the opposite clause; or by any unrighteous practices. See more of these words and of this thing on Exo\_22:25 Lev\_25:35, **36 Psa 15:5** Eze\_18:8.

**Shall gather it for him that will pity the poor;** it shall not long continue with him or his, but shall by God's righteous and powerful providence be disposed into more just and merciful hands.

Proverbs 28:9

**He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law,** that obstinately refuseth to yield audience or obedience to God's commands, even his prayer shall be abomination to God, whose law he despised. God will abhor and reject his person, and all his services.

Proverbs 28:10

**Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way;** that by evil counsel, or example, or artifice draws them into such practices as expose them to great danger and mischief.

**The upright shall have good things in possession;** shall by God's good providence towards him, both keep the good of which

the wicked seeks to deprive him, and escape that mischief which he plotteth against him.

Proverbs 28:11

**Is wise in his own conceit;** thinks himself to be wise when he is not, being puffed up with the opinion of his riches, which also he imputes to his own wisdom, and with the admirations and applauses of flatterers, which commonly attend upon them.

**Searcheth him out;** knoweth him better than he knoweth himself; and, looking through all his pomp and vain show, he sees him to be what indeed he is, a foolish and miserable man, notwithstanding all his riches, and discovers the folly of his words and actions.

Proverbs 28:12

**When righteous men do rejoice,** are encouraged and promoted to places of trust and power, there is great glory in that commonwealth. The state of that kingdom is honourable, and comfortable, and safe, so as good men can show their faces with courage and confidence.

**When the wicked rise,** are advanced to honour and authority,

**a man is hidden;** the state of that nation is so shameful and dangerous, that wise and good men, who only are worthy of the name of men, withdraw themselves, or run into corners and obscure places; partly out of grief and shame to behold the wickedness which is publicly and impudently committed; and partly to avoid the rage and injuries of wicked oppressors, and the judgments of God, which commonly follow such persons and their confederates in sin. Or, as others, both ancient and later interpreters, render it, *a man is sought out*. Sober and good men, who had retired themselves, are searched for, and brought forth like sheep to the slaughter, as being most suspected, and hated, and feared by bloody tyrants.

Proverbs 28:13

**That covereth his sins;** that doth not confess them (as appears by the opposite clause) to God, and to men too, when occasion requires it; that being convinced or admonished of his sins, either justifieth, or denieth, or excuseth them.

**Shall not prosper;** shall not succeed in his design of avoiding punishment by the concealment of his sins; shall not find mercy, as is implied from the next clause. Whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, by hearty dislike and hatred of all his sins, and by a resolved cessation from a sinful course of life. This is added, to show, that although the dissembling or hiding one's sins is sufficient for his damnation, yet mere confession without forsaking of sin is not sufficient for salvation.

**Shall have mercy,** both from God, who hath promised, and from men, who are ready to grant pardon and favour to such persons.

Proverbs 28:14

**Happy is the man,** because he shall thereby avoid that mischief which befalls fearless sinners, which is expressed in the next clause, and procure that eternal salvation which they lose.

**That feareth,** to wit, the offence and judgments of God; who having confessed and forsaken his sins, as was now said, is afraid to return to them again, and careful to avoid them, and all occasions of them.

**Always;** in all times, companies, and conditions; not only in the time of great trouble, when even hypocrites will in some sort be afraid of sinning, but in times of outward peace and prosperity.

**That hardeneth his heart;** that goeth on obstinately and securely in sinful courses, casting off due reverence to God, and just fear of his threatenings and judgments.

Proverbs 28:15

**The lion** and

**bear** are always cruel and greedy in their natures, and especially when they are hungry and want prey, in which case the lions roar, Psa\_104:21 Isa\_31:4, and bears range about for it.

**So is a wicked ruler;** instead of being a nursing father, and a faithful and tender shepherd, as he ought to be, he is a cruel and insatiable oppressor and devourer of them:

**Over the poor people;** whom he particularly mentions, either to note his policy in oppressing them only who were unable to withstand him, or to revenge themselves of him; or to aggravate

his sin in devouring them, whom the laws of God and common humanity bound him to relieve and protect; or to express the effect of his ill government, in making his people poor by his frauds and rapines.

Proverbs 28:16

The tyranny or oppression of a prince, though by some accounted wisdom, is in truth a manifest act and sign of great folly, because it alienateth from him the hearts of his people, in which his honour, and safety, and riches consist, and oftentimes causeth the shortening of his days, either from God, who cuts him off by some sudden judgment, or from men, who are injured by him, and exasperated against him.

**Covetousness** is the chief cause of all oppressions and unjust practices.

**Shall prolong his days**, by God's favour, the peace and satisfaction of his own mind, and the hearty love of his people, which makes them careful to preserve his life by their fervent prayers to God for him, by willingly hazarding their own estates and lives for him, when occasion requires it, and by all other possible means.

Proverbs 28:17

**A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person**, that sheddeth any man's blood, or taketh away his life unjustly,

**shall flee to the pit**; shall speedily be destroyed, being pursued by Divine vengeance, and the horrors of a guilty conscience, and the avengers of blood.

**Let no man stay him**: so it is a prohibition that no man should endeavour to save the life of a wilful murderer, either by intercession, or by offering satisfaction, or any other way; of which see Gen\_9:6 Exo\_21:14 Num\_35:31. Or, as the ancient and many other interpreters render it, *no man shall stay him* ; none shall desire or endeavour to save him from his deserved punishment; he shall die without pity, being an object of public hatred.

Proverbs 28:18

**Shall be saved**, to wit, from destruction, because God hath undertaken and promised to protect him.

**In his ways**, Heb. *in two ways* , of which phrase see above on Pro\_28:6.

**Shall fall at once**; once for all, so as he shall not need a second thrust, 1Sa\_26:8, and so as he shall never rise more. Or, *in one* , to wit, of his ways. Though he hath various ways and arts to secure himself, yet none of them shall save him, but he shall perish in one or other of them, and shall be given up by God to the mistake of his way, that he shall choose that course which will be most pernicious to him.

Proverbs 28:19

**That followeth after vain persons**; choosing their company, and imitating their example; who gives up himself to vanity and idleness, and so is fitly opposed to the diligent man in the former clause.

Proverbs 28:20

**A faithful man**, Heb. *a man of truth* , or *truths* , who deals truly and justly in all his bargains and transactions with men.

**That maketh haste**; more than God alloweth him; that taketh the nearest and readiest way to riches, whether it be right or wrong; that is unfaithful and unjust in his dealings.

**Shall not be innocent**; shall not obtain the blessings which he seeks, but shall bring curses and miseries upon him instead of them.

Proverbs 28:21

When a man hath once vitiated his conscience, and accustomed himself to take bribes, a very small advantage will make him sell justice, and his own soul into the bargain. The design of the proverb is to warn men to take heed of the beginnings of that sin, and consequently of other sins.

Proverbs 28:22

**Hath an evil eye**; is uncharitable to persons in want, envious towards those who get any thing besides him, and covetous or greedy of getting riches by all ways possible, whether just or

unjust. Thus *an evil eye is taken* , Pro\_23:6 Mat\_20:15, as a *good eye* notes the contrary disposition, Pro\_22:9.

**That poverty shall come upon him;** and consequently that he shall need the pity and help of others, which he cannot expect either from God or men, who hath so hardened himself against others in misery.

Proverbs 28:23

**Afterwards;** when he comes calmly to consider the fidelity of the reprover, and the benefit coming to himself by the reproof, and withal the baseness and mischief of flattery.

Proverbs 28:24

**Saith in his heart,** supposing that he hath a right to his father's goods.

**Is the companion of a destroyer;** either,

1. He hereby showeth that he is fallen into such wicked society, from whom he hath such counsel or example. Or,

2. He is no less guilty than a thief who robs and destroys men upon the highway; he is a thief and robber, because he hath no right to the actual possession of his father's goods before his death, or without his consent.

Proverbs 28:25

**He that is of a proud heart,** whose property it is to overvalue himself, and to trust to himself and his own wit, or wealth, or strength, stirreth up strife, because he makes it his great business to advance and please himself, and hateth and opposeth all that stand in his way, and despiseth other men, and is very jealous of his honour, and impatient of the least slighting, or affront, or injury, and indulgeth his own passions; and therefore shall not be fat, but lean and miserable, as is implied from the opposite clause.

**That putteth his trust in the Lord;** which is mentioned as a plain and certain evidence of a humble man, who is mean and vile in his own eyes, and therefore trusts not to himself, but to God only, making God's will, and not his own will, and passion, and interest, the rule of all his actions, and can easily deny himself, and yield to others, all which are excellent preventives of strife.

**Shall be made fat;** shall live happily and comfortably, because he avoids that strife which make men's lives miserable.

Proverbs 28:26

**He that trusteth in his own heart;** who trusts to his own wit, neglecting or slighting the advice of others, and the counsel of God himself.

**Is a fool;** and shall receive the fruit of his folly, to wit, destruction.

**Whoso walketh wisely,** distrusting his own judgment, and seeking the advice of others, and especially of God, as all truly wise men do, he shall be delivered from those dangers and mischiefs which fools bring upon themselves; whereby he showeth himself to be a wise man.

Proverbs 28:27

**Shall not lack;** shall not impoverish himself by it, as covetous men imagine or pretend; but shall be enriched, which is implied.

**That hideth his eyes,** lest he should see poor and miserable men, and thereby be moved to pity or obliged to relieve them. So he cunningly avoids the beginnings, and occasions, and provocations to charity; teaching us to use the same caution against sin.

**Shall have many a curse;** partly from the poor, whose curses, being not causeless, shall come upon him, and partly from God, who will curse his very blessings, and bring him to extreme want and misery.

Proverbs 28:28

**Men hide themselves;** men, i.e. righteous men, as appears from the following clause, are ashamed and afraid to appear publicly; of which See Poole "Pro\_28:12".

**The righteous increase;** they who were righteous do now again appear in public, and being advanced to that power which the wicked rulers have lost, they use their authority to encourage and promote righteousness, and to punish unrighteousness, whereby the number of wicked men is diminished, and the righteous are multiplied.

## **Proverbs 29:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 29

The excellency of wisdom, with rules for government, Pro\_29:1-14. The parents' duty to correct their children, Pro\_29:15-17. The misery of them that know not God's law, Pro\_29:18. Of anger, pride, thieving, cowardice, and corruption, Pro\_29:19-26. The godly and wicked an abomination to each other, Pro\_29:27.

**Hardeneth his neck;** is incorrigible, and obstinately persists in those sins for which he is reproved.

**Without remedy,** *utterly and irrecoverably* .

Proverbs 29:2

**In authority;** which interpretation is confirmed from the opposite clause. The Hebrew word signifies to increase either in number, or in dignity and power.

**The people rejoice,** for the blessed effects of their good government.

**The people mourn,** both for the oppressions and mischiefs which they feel, and for the dreadful judgments of God which they justly fear.

Proverbs 29:3

**Loveth wisdom;** and therefore hateth and escheweth all folly and wickedness.

**Keepeth company with harlots;** whereby he plainly discovers himself to want wisdom; of which see Pro\_7:7, &c.

**Spendeth his substance;** whereby he not only ruineth himself, but also grieveth his father, as is implied from the opposite clause.

Proverbs 29:4

**By judgment;** by the free and impartial exercise of justice.

**He that receiveth gifts,** Heb. *a man* (for he would not vouchsafe to call him a king, as being unworthy of that name and office) *of oblations or gifts* , i.e. whose delight and common practice it is to take bribes, and sell justice.

Proverbs 29:5

**A man that flattereth his neighbour,** that praiseth or applaudeth another in a sinful state or course, spreadeth a net for his feet; kills



him under a pretence of kindness; is an occasion of his sin, and consequently of destruction, which possibly he may design to accomplish by that means.

Proverbs 29:6

**There is a snare;** his sin will bring him to dreadful horrors and certain ruin.

**Doth sing and rejoice,** because he hath sweet peace in his own conscience, and assurance of present safety and eternal happiness.

Proverbs 29:7

**The righteous,** whether magistrate, or any private person concerned to know it, and capable of helping him in it,

**considereth the cause of the poor;** his poverty neither hinders him from taking pains to examine it, nor from a righteous determination of it.

**Regardeth not to know it;** will not put himself to the trouble of searching it out, either because it yields him no profit, or because he resolves to give away his right.

Proverbs 29:8

**Bring a city into a snare;** expose it to God's wrath and to destruction by their self-conceit and wilfulness, by their wicked counsels and courses, whereby they seduce and infect the generality of the people, by their contempt of God, of his just laws and righteous judgments, and of the opinions and advice, of wise men.

**Wise men,** who do not scorn, but hearken to the counsels of God and of prudent men, turn away wrath; the wrath of God or of men, who were enraged against it.

Proverbs 29:9

**If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man;** either judicially or otherwise debating any matter with him, endeavouring to convince him of any error;

**whether he,** the wise man, rageth (or is angry) or laugheth, i.e. whether he deal sharply and severely with him, rebuking him for his folly, or mildly and pleasantly smiling at it,

**there is no rest**, no end or fruit of the debate, the fool will not be satisfied nor convinced. Or, as it is in the Hebrew, *he* (to wit, the fool last named, to whom the following carriages may seem more fitly to agree) *both rageth and laugheth*, (he will not yield nor be convinced, but persists in his folly, which he discovers sometimes by his furious and unbridled passions, and sometimes by foolish laughter and scorning,) *and there*

**is no rest**; he will never be quieted.

Proverbs 29:10

**Hate the upright**, and consequently seek their ruin, as is implied from the following clause.

**Seek his soul**; either,

1. To require his soul or life at the hands of those who have taken it away. Or,
2. To preserve it from those who attempt to take it away, as this phrase is taken, Psa\_142:4, though commonly it signify to seek to destroy it.

Proverbs 29:11

**All his mind**; all at once, unnecessarily and unseasonably, without reservation or caution.

**Till afterwards**; till he have fit occasion to express it.

Proverbs 29:12

**If a ruler hearken to lies**, delight in flatteries or calumnies, or any lying words or deceitful and wicked practices,

**all his servants are wicked**; partly because he chooseth only such for his service; and partly because they are either corrupted by his example, or engaged by their place and interest to please him, and comply with his base lusts.

Proverbs 29:13

**The deceitful man**, Heb. *the man of deceits*, or *of usuries*, i.e. who hath enriched himself by such practices,

**meet together**; converse together, and one needeth the other, as Pro\_22:2.

**The Lord lighteneth both their eyes;** either their bodily eyes with the light of the sun, which promiscuously shines upon both; or the eyes of their minds with the light of reason and grace, which he indifferently gives to them; and therefore the one should not envy nor despise the other, but be ready to do good one to another, as God doth good to both.

Proverbs 29:14

**Judgeth the poor,** and the rich too; but he names

**the poor,** because these are most oppressed and injured by others, and least regarded by princes, and yet committed to their more special care by the King of kings.

Proverbs 29:15

**The rod and reproof;** correction and instruction going together.

**Left to himself;** suffered to follow his own will or lusts without restraint and chastening. *His mother* , and father too; but he names only *the mother* , either because her indulgence oft spoils the child, or because children commonly stand in least awe of their mothers, and abuse the weakness of their sex, and tenderness of their natures.

Proverbs 29:16

**Are multiplied;** or rather, are advanced, because this is opposed to their

**falling** in the next clause; and so this Hebrew word is taken above, Pro\_29:2.

**Transgression increaseth;** sin and sinners abound and grow impudent by impunity, and the example and encouragement of such rulers.

**Their fall;** the destruction of such transgressors in due time.

Proverbs 29:17

**Rest;** satisfaction to thy mind, and comfort in his amendment.

Proverbs 29:18

**No vision,** i.e. no prophecy, for the prophets were anciently called seers, 1Sa\_9:9, i.e. no public preaching of God's law or word, (as appears by the opposite clause,) which is called *prophecy* ,

Rom\_12:6 1Co\_14:1, &c., where the people are destitute of the means of instruction.

**The people perish**, because they want the only means of salvation. Or, *is made naked* ; stripped of their best ornaments, God's favour and protection, as this word is taken, Exo\_32:25.

**He that keepeth the law:** this he saith rather than

**he that hath vision**, which the laws of opposition might seem to require, to teach us that, although the want of God's word be sufficient for men's destruction, yet the having, and hearing, or reading of it is not sufficient for their salvation, except they also keep or obey it.

Proverbs 29:19

**A servant**, who is so not only ill condition, but also in the temper of his mind, disingenuous, perverse, and stubborn,

**will not be corrected by words;** by mere words without blows. Compare Pro\_19:29.

**Though he understand**, though he know thy mind and words, and his own duty,

**he will not answer;** either by words, expressing his readiness; or by deeds, speedily and cheerfully performing thy commands; but will neglect his duty, pretending that he did not hear or understand thee.

Proverbs 29:20

**In his words;** or rather, *in his business* , who is rash and heady in the management of his affairs.

**There is more hope of a fool**, who is sensible of his folly, and willing to hearken to the advice of others, as this word is used, Pro\_26:12, though commonly it be meant of a wilful and wicked fool;

**than of him**, because he is self-confident, and neither considers things seriously within himself, nor seeks counsel from the wise.

Proverbs 29:21

**He that delicately bringeth up his servant**, allowing him too much freedom, and familiarity, and delicious fare, shall have him

become his son; will find him at last grow insolent and presumptuous, and forgetful of his servile condition.

Proverbs 29:22

Is by his passion easily transported into grievous and manifold sins against God, and others, and himself, as swearing, and cursing, and violence, yea, sometimes even to murder.

Proverbs 29:23

**Shall bring him low**, because both God and man conspire against him, and abhor him.

**Honour shall uphold the humble in spirit**; or, as others render it, without any difference in the sense,

**the humble in spirit shall hold their honour**, shall be honoured by God and men. Thus honour, like a shadow, flees from them that pursue it, and follows them who flee from it.

Proverbs 29:24

**Whoso is partner with a thief**, by receiving a share of the stolen goods upon condition of his concealment of the theft,

**hateth his own soul**; he carrieth himself towards it as if he hated it; he woundeth and destroyeth it.

**He heareth cursing**; he heareth the voice of swearing, as is said, Lev\_5:1; the oath given to him by a judge adjuring him and other suspected persons to give information concerning it; and

**betrayeth it not**; which he is bound to do, both by virtue of his oath, and for the public good, which ought to be preferred before all private contracts or friendships.

Proverbs 29:25

**The fear of man**, inordinate fear of harm or mischief from men, which is fitly opposed to trust in God, because it comes from a distrust of God's promise and providence,

**bringeth a snare**; is an occasion of many sins, and of great danger, both of injuries from men, and of sore punishments from God.

**Putteth his trust in the Lord;** keeping God's way, and securely relying upon God to protect him from the designs and rage of wicked men.

Proverbs 29:26

**Seek the ruler's favour:** men study to please and engage their rulers by their obliging carriage, and humble petitions, and all other means, supposing that to be the only way to procure either right or favour from them, as they need or desire it.

**Every man's judgment,** the decision of his cause, and the success of all his endeavours,

**cometh from the Lord;** dependeth wholly upon God, who ruleth and inclineth their minds and hearts as it pleaseth him, Pro\_21:1.

Proverbs 29:27

**Is an abomination to the just,** because such men, as such, are hated by God, and haters of and enemies unto God and all goodness, and public plagues to the church and state in which they live; and therefore he who loves these must needs hate them, as true friends hate those who are enemies to their friends.

**Is abomination to the wicked;** of which See Poole "Pro\_29:10".

### **Proverbs 30:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 30

Agur's prophecy, Pro\_30:1; wherein he acknowledgeth his own ignorance, Pro\_30:2,3. The purity of God's word, with the happiness of them that trust in him, Pro\_30:5. He dehorts from adding to the Scriptures, by the danger of it, Pro\_30:6. The two points of his prayer, with their reason, Pro\_30:7-9. Four wicked generations, Pro\_30:10-14. Four things insatiable, Pro\_30:15,16. Parents not to be despised, Pro\_30:17. Four things hard to be known, Pro\_30:18,19. The way of an adulterous woman, Pro\_30:20. Four things intolerable, Pro\_30:21-23. Four things little, but wise, Pro\_30:24-28. Four things stately, Pro\_30:29-31.

**Agur the son of Jakeh;** a person so called, as appears from the designation of his own and his father's name, who lived either in Solomon's time, or rather afterwards, and was famous in his generation for wisdom, and piety, and prophecy; and therefore his proverbs were thought fit to be added to those of Solomon, either

by those men of Hezekiah, mentioned Pro\_25:1, or by some other. But that this should be meant of Solomon may easily be supposed, but cannot be proved; nor is it probable, as being contrary both to the style of the whole chapter, and to the matter of some part of it, as Pro\_30:7-9, which agrees not to Solomon; and to the laws of good interpretation, one of which is, that all words should be taken in their most natural and proper sense, when there is no evidence nor necessity of understanding them improperly and figuratively, which is the present case.

**The prophecy;** the prophetic instruction; for as the prophets were public preachers as well as foretellers of things to come, so their sermons, no less than their predictions, are commonly called their *prophecies*.

**Unto Ithiel and Ucal;** two friends, or disciples, and contemporaries of Agur, called by those names, who having a great and just opinion of his wisdom, desired his instructions. Others, *concerning Ithiel and Ucal* ; which they understand of Christ, called

**Ithiel**, which signifies *God with me* , and answers to *Immanuel* , which is *God with us* ; and

**Ucal**, which signifies *power* or *prevalency* . But if he had meant this of Christ, why should he design him such obscure and ambiguous names, as if he would not be understood? Why did he not call him by the name of *Shiloh* or *Messiah* , or some other Scripture title belonging and ascribed to him? Besides, this interpretation agrees not with the contents of this chapter, wherein there is only a short and occasional mention of Christ, but the chapter consists in a manner wholly of counsels and sentences of a quite other kind.

Proverbs 30:2

You come to me with a great opinion of my wisdom, and you expect that I should inform and instruct you in all things, yea, even in the greatest mysteries: but you are much mistaken in me; I am as ignorant and foolish as other men generally are, yea, more than many others; which he utters either,

1. From a deep sense of the common corruption of human nature, and of the blindness of men's minds in things concerning God and

their own duty, and of the necessity of instruction from God's word, and of illumination from his Spirit, without which they can never understand these matters. Or,

2. From a modest and humble apprehension of his own ignorance, which hath extorted such-like expressions even from heathen philosophers; whence Pythagoras rejected the title of a wise man when it was ascribed to him; and Socrates, though reputed the wisest man of his age, professed that he *knew nothing but this, that he knew nothing* .

Proverbs 30:3

**I neither learned wisdom;** I have not been taught in the schools of wisdom, as the sons of prophets were, but must own myself to be an unlearned man, as the prophet Amos was, Amo\_7:14,**15**. Or, I have not learned it, neither by my own understanding and study, nor by the help of other men.

**Of the holy;** either,

1. Of the holy angels, who are called holy by way of eminency, as Deu\_33:2 Job\_15:15 Dan\_4:13,**17,23 8:13**. But it was vain to deny that angelical knowledge to be in him, which no man imagined to be in him, and which was not in Adam fix the state of innocency. Or,

2. Of the holy prophets. So the sense is, I have not such Divine inspirations as prophets strictly so called have received, whereby I should be enabled to know or explain those great mysteries wherein you desire information from me. Or,

3. Of holy things, of the mind and will of God concerning man's salvation, and the way which leads to it; not that he denieth that he had any knowledge of these things, but only a full, and comprehensive, and perfect knowledge, which they falsely supposed to be in him.

Proverbs 30:4

**Who?** what mere man? None at all; and therefore I may truly say, that I have not that which no mortal man ever yet had.

**Hath ascended up into heaven;** there to learn the mind of God who dwells there, and that wisdom which is from above.



**Or descended;** or rather, *and descended* , to teach men below what he had learned above. The meaning of the place is, No man can fully know and teach us these things unless he hath been in heaven, and sent down from thence to the earth to that end; whence our Saviour Christ justly applies these words to himself, Joh\_3:13, and appropriates this work of declaring God's nature and will to men to himself, upon this account, that he alone was in his Father's bosom, Joh\_1:18.

**Hath gathered the wind in his fists,** to hold them in, or let them out, and rule them at his pleasure. Where is there a man that can do this? And none but he who made and governs all the creatures can know and teach these things. *The waters* ; those above in the clouds, and those below, the sea, which God keeps as it were *within doors* , and in a *garment* and *swaddling-band* , as it is expressed, Job\_38:8,9; and the waters which he shuts up in the bowels of the earth.

**All the ends of the earth;** the whole earth, from one end to another, which God upholdeth in the air by the word of his power, and secureth from the rage of the sea, by the banks and shores wherewith he hath begirt it for that purpose.

**What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?** The sense is either,

1. Seeing it is apparent that no man hath this power, and consequently this knowledge, but that this is the prerogative of the great God, declare, if thou art able, his name, i.e. his nature and perfections, and the eternal generation and the perfections of his Son. Or rather,

2. If thou thinkest there be any such man who can do these things, I challenge thee to produce his name; or if he be long since dead, and gone out of the world, the name of any of his posterity that can assure us that their progenitor was such a person; which because thou canst not do, I must conclude that none can thoroughly understand this matter but the blessed God, and his Son Christ, and they to whom God shall reveal it by Christ.

Proverbs 30:5

**Every word of God is pure;** and therefore you, Ithiel and Ucal, must not expect the full knowledge of Divine mysteries from me,

nor from any man, but from the word of God, which is a certain rule, both of your belief and practice, because every part and parcel of it is holy, and true, and good, and there is not the least mixture of falsehood and folly in it, as there is in all the words and writings of men.

**That put their trust in him;** which supposeth their knowledge of him by his word, Psa\_9:10; and contains their reliance upon his promises, joined with obedience to his commands.

Proverbs 30:6

And as the word of God is pure, do not thou corrupt or abuse it, by adding to it thine own or other men's inventions and opinions, and delivering or receiving of them in the name and as the words of God. He here forbids only adding to it, not diminishing from it, which yet is equally forbidden, Deu\_4:2 **12:32**, because the Israelites then and always were, and others are, more prone to add than to diminish, because it is more easy to add under colour of interpreting, and because it is more agreeable to the humour of mankind, which is much delighted with its own inventions, as the experience of all ages showeth. *Lest he reprove thee by words or deeds* ; by discovering thy folly, and bringing thee to deserved shame and punishment.

Proverbs 30:7

**Have I required;** I do earnestly and especially desire *Deny me them not before I die* , Heb.

**withhold them not from me before I die**, i.e. whilst I live, as things of great and continual necessity for thy honour and service, and my own good.

Proverbs 30:8

**Remove far from me;** from my heart, and from the course of my life. This is the first of Agur's petitions.

**Vanity;** either,

1. All vain and false opinions concerning God, or the things of God; all unbelief, idolatry, or misbelief. Or,
2. All vanity of heart and life; a vain conversation, an affectation of the vain things of this world, as riches, pleasures, or honours,

the bewitching power and sad effects whereof he had observed in others, and feared in himself, as the following request implies.

**Lies;** all falsehood and deceit in my words and carriage towards God or men.

**Give me neither poverty nor riches:** this is his second request, which may seem to have some reference to the former, poverty being commonly the occasion and temptation to the sin of lying, and riches being the great occasions and enticements to vanity. Thus, as his first petition was against the sins themselves, so this latter is against the occasions of them.

**Food convenient for me;** moderate, and suitable both to my natural necessities, and to that estate and condition of life in which thou hast put me, and to that work and service which thou hast for me to do. And this mediocrity of estate is so amiable, that it hath been oft desired by wise heathens, as more eligible than a state of the greatest plenty and glory.

Proverbs 30:9

**Deny thee,** by trusting to riches, which is a denial of God, Job\_31:24-28, by unthankfulness for and abuse of his mercies, and by rebellion against him, and divers other courses and common practices of rich men, whereby God is denied in truth and in works, even when he is owned in words and in show.

**Who is the Lord,** that I should obey or serve him? I do not need him, I can live of my own without him. Lest by degrees I should arrive at downright atheism or infidelity, which is most incident to rich and great men, as is manifest from experience.

**Take the name of my God in vain;** use false oaths, either to vindictate myself when I am suspected or accused of theft, and my oath is required according to the law, Exo\_22:8-11, or to gratify others for filthy lucre, as poor men frequently do.

Proverbs 30:10

**Accuse not a servant,** to wit, maliciously, rashly, or without just and sufficient cause; for otherwise, in some cases, this may be not only lawful, but a duty, as when a servant lives wickedly, or robs his master, or the like,

**A servant;** whose condition is in itself mean and miserable, and therefore thou shouldst not make it worse without great and apparent necessity.

**Curse thee;** desire God to curse and punish thee, which though it may be sinful in him, yet being deserved by thee, thou hast reason to fear and expect.

**Be found guilty** by God, who is ready to plead the cause of the afflicted, and upon strict search shall find thee guilty, and punish thee accordingly.

Proverbs 30:11

**A generation;** a sort of men, abominable both to God and men; which is implied concerning these and the following kinds of sinners, Pro\_30:12-14.

**Their father,** and mother too, as it follows; ungrateful and unnatural monsters.

Proverbs 30:12

Who not only pretend to others, but conceit within themselves, that they are truly religious persons, when they live in the course of wickedness.

Proverbs 30:13

Who are proud and insolent, advancing themselves, and despising all others in comparison of themselves, and showing the pride of their hearts in their countenances and carriages.

Proverbs 30:14

Extortioners, and cruel oppressors, who grind the faces of the poor.

Proverbs 30:15

**The horseleech,** an insatiable creature, sucking blood till it be ready to burst,

**hath two daughters;** which are either,

1. The two forks into which her tongue is divided, and wherewith she sucks: but those who have more accurately observed and described the frame of that creature tell us that they have no tongue, and that they suck either by three little teeth, or several parts of the mouth gathered and compressed together. Or rather,

2. The following things, which resemble the horse leech in its insatiableness; nothing being more ordinary than to call those persons or things *the sons* or *daughters* of those whose examples they imitate. And whereas it is objected, that they are not only two, but *three*, yea, *four*, as is said in the next clause, the answer is easy, that though he begin with two, yet he proceeds from thence to three, and four, all which are said to be the daughters of the horseleech, if the words be rendered commodiously, and as they are in the Hebrew, as we shall presently see.

**Crying, Give, give;** never filled, and always craving, and ready to receive more and more.

**There are three things;** or, yea, (which may be understood in this, as it is in our translation of the next clause,) *they* (to wit, the daughters of the horseleech) are three; that are never satisfied; which is added partly to explain the former clause,

**Give, give,** and to show the cause of that excessive desire of more, because they were not contented with what they had; and partly to give the reason why he calls them *the daughters of the horseleech*. *Yea, four things say not*; or, yea, *they* (the daughters forementioned) are *four*, which *say not*.

Proverbs 30:16

**The barren womb;** for as the Israelitish women did generally and vehemently desire many children, for divers reasons elsewhere mentioned; so those who were barren amongst them were most eager in those desires, as we see in Rachel, Gen\_30:1, and as in all other cases persons most prize and thirst after those good things which they want.

**The earth;** which when it is dry thirsts for rain, and in a little time sucks up great quantities of water, and gapes for more.

**The fire;** which continually burns as long as there is any combustible matter left for it.

Proverbs 30:17

**The eye that mocketh at his father;** he that scorneth or derideth his parents, though it be but with a look or gesture, and much more when he breaks out into opprobrious words and actions.

**The ravens of the valley shall pick it out;** he shall die an unnatural, and untimely, and ignominious death, and after death shall lie unburied, and so be exposed to the birds and beasts of prey, and, amongst others, to the crows or ravens, who use to feed upon dead carcasses, and particularly to pick out their eyes, as is noted by all sorts of writers; of which see my Latin Synopsis. He saith, the ravens of the valley, either because they most delight in valleys, or with a particular respect unto that valley near Jerusalem, which was called the valley of dead bodies, Jer\_31:40, from the carcasses cast out there, to which therefore the ravens resorted in great numbers, according to their manner or, as others render, the ravens of the brooks, because they are of a hot and dry temper, and therefore delight in places adjacent to the brooks of water.

**The young eagle;** which also preyeth upon dead carcasses and especially upon their eyes, as the ravens do, the reason being the same in both, whether it be the softness of that part which makes it more easy to them to take, or from the pleasant taste of it.

Proverbs 30:18

The way whereof I cannot trace or find out.

Proverbs 30:19

**The way of an eagle in the air;** either,

1. The manner of her flight, which is exceeding high, and swift, and strong. Or rather,
2. The way or part of the air through which she passeth, without leaving any print or sign in it, which though it be true of all birds, yet is here attributed to the eagle, of whom this is more true, because she flies out of sight, where neither her body nor any sign of it can be discerned.

**The way of a serpent upon a rock;** where she leaves no impression, nor slime, nor token where she was, as she doth in softer bodies, and as birds leave their feathers there.

**The way of a ship in the midst of the sea;** which though at present it make a furrow, yet is speedily closed again. The way of a man with a maid; either,

1. The various methods and artifices which young men use to entice or persuade young virgins, either to honest love and marriage, or to unlawful lust and uncleanness. Or rather,

2. The impure conversation of a man with one who goeth under the name of a maid, but is not so in truth, which is managed with so much secrecy and cunning that it can very hardly be discovered; which exposition agrees best with the foregoing similitudes referred to it, and with the following verse.

Proverbs 30:20

**Such**, so secret and undiscernible,

**is the way of an adulterous woman**; of her who, though she be called and accounted a *maid* yet in truth is an adulteress: not a common strumpet, for of such the following words are not true, but one that secretly lives in the sin of adultery or fornication.

**She eateth**, to wit, *the bread of deceit in secret* , by which is understood the act of filthiness, Pro\_9:17 **20:17**, which such persons do as greedily desire, and as delightfully feed upon, as hungry persons do upon bread. Thus chastely doth the Holy Ghost express the most filthy actions, to teach us to avoid all immodest and obscene speeches as well as actions.

**Wipeth her mouth**, as a child doth when it hath eaten some forbidden food, and would not be discovered.

**Saith, I have done no wickedness**; denies the fact, and avoweth her innocency.

Proverbs 30:21

**The earth is disquieted**; either,

1. The earth itself trembleth and is moved; so it is an hyperbole. Or rather,

2. The inhabitants of the earth. They do by their insolence and impudence cause great and dreadful disturbances in the places where they live.

**Which it cannot bear**; which are intolerable in human societies.

Proverbs 30:22

**When he reigneth;** when he is advanced to great power and dignity; for such a one is ignorant and unfit for his place, and therefore commits many errors; he is poor, and therefore an insatiable oppressor, according to Pro\_28:3; he is proud and imperious, and being maligned and hated by others, he is provoked to hate them, and to be injurious and cruel to them.

**A fool,** a conceited and wilful fool, or all obstinately wicked man, **when he is filled with meat;** either,

1. When he is gluttoned with meat or drink, which dulls men's reason, and heats their blood, and stirs them up to many insolencies. Or rather,
2. When he abounds in wealth, which in that case is like a sword in a madman's hand, being an instrument and occasion of innumerable wickednesses and mischiefs, as appears from common experience.

Proverbs 30:23

**Odious;** proud, and perverse, and full of hateful and offensive qualities.

**When she is married;** for then she displayeth and exerciseth all those ill humours, which before for her own ends she concealed; then she is puffed up, and imperious, and becomes intolerable to her own family, and to her relations and neighbours.

**That is heir to her mistress;** that possesseth her estate, either by the gift of her mistress, into whose favour she had insinuated herself by her cunning and officious carriage; or rather by the marriage of her master, which great and sudden change transports her beside herself, and makes her insufferably proud, and scornful, and injurious to all that converse with her.

Proverbs 30:24

Comparatively to other brute creatures. They act very wisely and providently, not from any reason which they have, but by the direction of Divine Providence, which secretly guides them to do those things for their own preservation which are most agreeable to the rules of wisdom. The design of this observation is either,



1. To commend wisdom to us, and to teach us to imitate the providence of these creatures, as we are provoked to imitate their diligence, Pro\_6:6. Or,

2. To keep us from being proudly conceited of our own wisdom, because we are either equalled or exceeded therein by the unreasonable creatures in the wise conduct of their affairs. Or,

3. To direct us to whom to resort for wisdom when we want and desire it, even to that God who is able to inspire wisdom even into the brute creatures.

Proverbs 30:25

**People;** which title is oft given to the unreasonable creatures, both in Scripture, as Joe\_1:6 **2:2**, and in Homer, and Virgil, and divers other authors.

**They prepare their meat in the summer;** of which See Poole "Pro\_30:6", See Poole "Pro\_30:7", See Poole "Pro\_30:8".

Proverbs 30:26

In rocky ground, or in the holes of rocks, for their safety against their too potent enemies.

Proverbs 30:27

**Have no king** to rule and order them.

**By bands;** in great numbers, and in several companies, and in exact order, as is observed in Scripture, as Jud\_6:5 **7:12** Joe\_1:6 **2:7**, and by other writers.

Proverbs 30:28

**The spider taketh hold** of the thread which she spins out of her own bowels with her hands; with her legs, which he calls hands, because they serve her for the same purpose, to do her work, to weave her web, and to catch gnats or flies, &c.

**Is in kings' palaces;** is not only in poor cottages, but many times in palaces also, where she makes a shift to keep her abode, notwithstanding all the care and pains which is taken to sweep and cleanse it.

Proverbs 30:29

That walk decently, and with great alacrity and courage; which are here commended to us to imitate in the management of our affairs.

Proverbs 30:30

He doth not flee from his pursuers, whether men or beasts, but walketh away with a slow and majestic pace, as is observed by Aristotle, and many others.

Proverbs 30:31

**A greyhound**, called in Hebrew, *girt in the lions* ; either because its loins are slender, and as it were girt up into a little compass, and tight or well trussed up: or because of its great agility and swiftness; for the girding of the loins was used for expedition in going or working. Or, as it is rendered by others *a horse* , to wit, a war-horse, having his armour girt about him, and marching to the battle, which he doth with great majesty and courage, as God himself observes at large, Job\_39:19, &c.

**An he-goat**; which marcheth in the head of the flock in grave and stately manner, conducting them with great courage and resolution, and being ready to fight for them, either with beasts or men that oppose him; whence great captains are oft compared to he-goats, as Isa\_14:9 **Jer 18 Da 8:5,21 Zec 10:3**.

**A king, against whom there is no rising up**; a mighty and victorious king, whose power none can withstand, who therefore goeth hither and thither, and proceedeth in his affairs with invincible courage and majesty. But this place, with the variation of one Hebrew point, reading *ammo* for *immo* , may be rendered, as a very learned man observes, a king, and his people with him; a king when he hath the hearts and hands of his people going along with him in his undertakings.

Proverbs 30:32

**In lifting up thyself**; either,

1. By rebellion or sedition against the king last mentioned. Or,
2. By anger or wrath, of which he speaks in the next verse. But this verse hath no necessary dependence either upon the foregoing or following verse. Or,
3. Through thy pride, which makes men carry themselves very foolishly, and scornfully, and injuriously, and is the root of contention, as was observed, Pro\_13:10.

**Thought evil**, i.e. designed any mischief or injury against thy neighbour.

**Lay thine hand upon thy mouth**, to wit, to shut it. Be silent, as this phrase is used, Job\_21:5 **29:9**. Restrain thyself, do not speak one word, much less do any thing tending to the accomplishment of it; do not open thy mouth to justify or excuse it, but silently and seriously consider the evil of it, and repent of it, and do so no more.

Proverbs 30:33

**The forcing of wrath**; the stirring up of wrath, either,

1. In a man's self towards others, by giving way to passion, or by fixing his thoughts upon those things which may inflame it. Or,
2. In others by reproaches, injuries, or any other provocations.

**Bringeth forth strife**; is the cause of many quarrels, and much mischief among men.

### **Proverbs 31:1** PROVERBS CHAPTER 31

Lemuel's lesson concerning chastity and temperance, Pro\_31:1-5. The proper use of wine, Pro\_31:6,**7**. An exhortation to righteous judgment, Pro\_31:8,**9**. A description of a virtuous wife, Pro\_31:10, with her husband's confidence in her, Pro\_31:11. Her work and careful provision for her household, Pro\_31:12-20. Their furniture and clothing, Pro\_31:21,**22**. The properties and praise of a good wife, Pro\_31:23-29. The vanity of beauty; the good are to be praised, Pro\_31:30,**31**.

**Of king Lemuel**, i.e. of Solomon, by the general consent both of Jewish and Christian writers; to whom this name doth very fitly agree, for it signifies one *of or from God*, or *belonging to God*; and such a one was Solomon eminently, being given by God to David and Bathsheba, as a pledge of his reconciliation to them after their repentance; of whom it is expressly said that *the Lord loved him*, 2Sa\_12:24, and who was by God himself appointed to succeed David in the kingdom. Possibly his mother gave this name to mind him of his great obligations to God, and of the justice and necessity of his devoting himself unto God's service and glory.

**The prophecy;** so called, either,

1. More especially, because she did either by natural sagacity, or by Divine inspiration, foresee Solomon's danger, and what sins he was most likely to be either inclined or tempted to commit; and therefore thought fit to give him these precautions, Or,

2. More generally, as all godly discourses or counsels are called prophecies; of which see on Pro\_30:1, and elsewhere.

**His mother,** Bathsheba, who having truly repented of her adultery, did not only avoid it in herself for the future, but seriously endeavoured to prevent that and such-like sins in others, and especially in Solomon, whom the remembrance of her sin might possibly provoke to an imitation of her example. But when she gave him these instructions is but matter of conjecture. Probably it was either,

1. When she first discerned his inclinations to those sins of which she here warns him, to which she saw he was like to have many and strong provocations. Or,

2. After he was made king, and had more plainly discovered his proneness to these excesses, although he had not yet broken forth into those scandalous enormities into which he afterwards fell.

Proverbs 31:2

**What?** a short speech, arguing her great passion for him; what dost thou do? or, what words shall I take? what counsels shall I give thee? My heart is full, I must give it vent; but where shall I begin?

**The son of my womb;** my son, not by adoption, but whom I bare in my womb, and brought forth with great pain, and brought up with tender care; and therefore it is my duty to give thee admonitions, and thine to receive them; and what I speak is from sincere and fervent affection to thee, which I trust thou wilt not despise.

**The son of my vows;** on whose behalf I have made many prayers, and sacrifices, and solemn vows to God; whom I have, as far as in me lay, devoted to the work, and service, and glory of God.

Proverbs 31:3

**Thy strength;** the rigour of thy mind and body, which is greatly impaired by inordinate lusts, as all physicians agree, and frequent experience showeth.

**Thy ways;** thy conversation or course of life.

**To that which destroyeth kings;** the same thing repeated in other words, as is very usual in these books; to the immoderate love of women, which is most destructive to kings and kingdoms, as was well known to Solomon by the example of his father David, and by many other sad instances left upon record in all histories.

Proverbs 31:4

**To drink wine,** to wit, to drunkenness or excess, as the next verse explains it.

Proverbs 31:5

**Forget the law;** the laws of God, by which they are to govern themselves and their kingdoms.

**Pervert the judgment** of any of the afflicted; which may easily be done by a drunken judge, because drunkenness deprives a man of the use of reason; by which alone men can distinguish between right and wrong, and withal stirs up those passions which incline him both to precipitation and partiality.

Proverbs 31:6

**Unto him;** which is to be understood comparatively, to him rather than to kings, partly because he needs a liberal draught of it more than kings do; and principally because if it proceed to excess, in him it is only a private inconvenience, but in kings it is a public mischief and grievance.

**Ready to perish;** sorely afflicted and overwhelmed with sorrow, as it is explained in the following words; for such need a cordial.

Proverbs 31:7

For wine, moderately used, allayeth men's cares and fears, and cheereth their spirits, Psa\_104:15.

Proverbs 31:8

**Open thy mouth,** speak freely and impartially, as becomes a king and judge to do, for the dumb; for such as cannot speak in their

own cause, either through ignorance and infirmity, or because of the dread of their more potent adversaries, or of the majesty of the king sitting in judgment.

**Such as are appointed to destruction;** who without such succour from the judge are like to be utterly ruined, whom therefore both justice and charity oblige thee to preserve.

Proverbs 31:9

No text from Poole on this verse.

Proverbs 31:10

**A virtuous woman,** whom he may take to wife. Such a person is hardly to be found. Compare Ecc\_7:28. And here he lays down several characters or qualifications of an excellent wife, which are here delivered in alphabetical order, each verse beginning with a several and the succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet; which method is used in some, and but in a few places of Scripture, to oblige us to the more diligent consideration and careful remembrance of them, as things of more than ordinary importance. And such this matter is, partly because the good or bad education even of private families, which depends much upon the mother's qualifications, hath a mighty influence upon the welfare or misery of commonwealths; and partly because the right education of royal families is in itself a very public blessing, and therefore it is the interest and happiness of whole kingdoms that their kings should have virtuous and pious wives.

Proverbs 31:11

**Doth safely trust in her,** for the prudent and faithful management of all his domestic affairs, which are committed to her care.

**So that he shall have no need of spoil;** the sense is either,

1. He shall want no necessary provisions for his family, which are sometimes called spoil, or prey, as below, Pro\_31:15 Psa\_111:5 Luk\_11:22. Or,

2. He shall not need to use indirect and unlawful courses to get wealth, by cheating or oppressing his subjects or others, as princes have oft done to maintain the luxury of their wives, and as Solomon himself afterwards did, of which see on 1Ki\_12:4,**10,11**, because all shall be abundantly supplied to him by her providence.

Proverbs 31:12

She will improve, and not waste his estate.

Proverbs 31:13

**She seeketh wool and flax**, that she may find employment for her servants, and not suffer them to spend all their time unprofitably in ease and idleness.

**Worketh willingly with her hands**; she encourageth them to work by her example; which was a common practice among princesses in those first and purest ages of the world. Not that it is the duty of kings and queens to use manual or mechanical operations, but that it is the duty of all persons, the greatest not excepted, to improve all their talents, and particularly their time, which is one of the noblest of them, one way or other to the service of that God to whom they must give an account, and to the good of that community to which they are related and obliged.

Proverbs 31:14

By the sale of her homespun commodities she purchaseth the choicest goods which come from far countries.

Proverbs 31:15

**While it is yet night**; early in the morning, to redeem thee.

**Giveth meat**; distributeth all her necessary provisions.

**A portion**; either,

1. Of work, which she allots to them. Or rather,

2. Of provisions for them; for so this word is used, Gen\_47:22 Lev\_10:13, **14 Pr 30:8**, and no where, to my remembrance, of an allotment of work. And so this clause agrees best with the former, expressing the same thing in other words, according to the manner.

Proverbs 31:16

**She considereth a field**; whether it be fit for her use, and of a reasonable price, and how she may purchase it. This excludes the rashness, as her proceeding to

**buy** it excludes the inconstancy, which is oft incident to that sex.

**With the fruit of her hands**, with the effects of her diligence,

**she planteth a vineyard;** she improveth the land to the best advantage.

Proverbs 31:17

**She girdeth her loins with strength;** she useth great diligence and expedition in her employment; for which end men in those times used to gird up their long and loose garments about their loins.

**Strengtheneth her arms;** putteth forth her utmost strength in her business.

Proverbs 31:18

**She perceiveth that her merchandise is good;** she finds great comfort and good success in her labours.

**Her candle goeth not out by night; which is not to be taken strictly,** but only signifies her unwearied care and industry, which is oft expressed by labouring *day and night* , or *continually* .

Proverbs 31:19

By her own example she provoketh her servants to labour. And although in these later and more delicate and luxurious times, such mean employments are grown out of fashion among great persons, yet they were not so in former ages, neither in other countries, nor in this land; whence all women unmarried are to this day called in the language of our law *spinsters* .

Proverbs 31:20

**To relieve their necessities.** Her designs are generous and noble; for she labours not only to supply her own and her household necessities, or to support her own state, much less to feed her pride and luxury, but that she may have wherewith to supply the wants of others who crave or need her assistance; which also procures God's blessing upon her husband, and children, and whole family, to whom, by this means, she brings both honour and advantage.

Proverbs 31:21

**She is not afraid of the snow,** or of any injuries of the weather.

**All her household are clothed with scarlet;** she hath provided enough, not only for their necessity and defence against cold and other inconveniences, which is here supposed, but also for their



delight and ornament; so that not only herself, and husband, and children, but some of the better rank of her servants, wear scarlet; which was more cheap and familiar in those times and countries than now it is with us. Or, as it is rendered in our margin, and by divers others, *are clothed with double garments* , which is necessary and customary in cold seasons.

Proverbs 31:22

**Coverings of tapestry**, for the furniture of her house.

**Silk and purple**, which was very agreeable to her high quality, though it doth not justify that luxury in attire which is now usual among persons of far lower ranks, both for wealth and dignity.

Proverbs 31:23

**Known**; observed and respected, not only for his own worth, but for his wife's sake; not only for those rich ornaments which by her care and diligence she provides for him, which others of his brethren, by reason of their wives' sloth or luxury, are not able to procure, but also for his wisdom in choosing, and his happiness in enjoying, so excellent a wife, by whose prudent care, in the management of his domestic concerns, he hath perfect freedom wholly to attend upon public affairs.

**Sitteth among the elders of the land**, in counsel or judgment.

Proverbs 31:24

Curiously wrought of linen, and gold, or other precious materials, Jer\_13:1 Dan\_10:5, which in those parts were used both by men, 2Sa\_20:8, and by women, Isa\_3:24 Son\_7:1.

Proverbs 31:25

**Strength**; not strength of body, which is no ornament of that sex, save only as she preserves her health and strength by sobriety and exercise, which other men waste by intemperance and idleness; but strength of mind, magnanimity, courage, resolution, activity.

**Honour**; either,

1. Her prudent, and pious, and amiable behaviour, in which true honour principally consists. Or,
2. That good name and honourable esteem which she hath gained amongst all that know her by her virtuous disposition and carriage.

**Her clothing;** these, and not her rich garments mentioned before, are her great ornament and glory.

**She shall rejoice in thee to come:** the sense is either,

1. In her old age she reaps the comfort and benefit of her youthful labours, Or rather,

2. She lives in constant tranquillity of mind, and a confident and cheerful expectation of all future events, how calamitous soever, partly because she hath laid in provisions for a rainy day, and chiefly because she hath the comfortable remembrance of a well-spent life, and, which follows thereupon, a just confidence in God's gracious providence and promises made to such persons.

Proverbs 31:26

**She openeth her mouth with wisdom;** she is neither sullenly silent, nor full of vain and impertinent talk, as many women are, but speaks directly and piously, as occasion offereth itself.

**In her tongue is the law of kindness;** her speeches are not froward and provoking, as those of foolish women frequently are, but most obliging and amiable, as being guided by wisdom and grace, and not by inordinate lusts and passions. And this practice is called

**a law in her tongue,** because it is constant and customary, and proceeds from an inward and powerful principle of true wisdom, which in a manner necessitates and constrains her to discourse like herself, so that in a moral sense she cannot speak otherwise, unless she offer violence to herself, or the nature of the thing require sharp and severe expressions.

Proverbs 31:27

**She looketh well to the ways of her household;** she diligently observeth the management and progress of her domestic business, and the whole carriage and conversation of her children and servants; whereby also he intimates that she spends not her time in gadding abroad to other houses, and idle discourses about the concerns of other persons, as the manner of many women is, but is wholly intent upon her own house and proper business.

**Eateth not the bread of idleness;** that which is got by idleness, or without labour.

Proverbs 31:28

**Her children;** whose testimony is the more considerable, because they have been constant eye-witnesses of her whole carriage, and therefore must have seen her misdemeanours, if there had been any, as well as her virtues.

**Arise up;** either,

1. In token of reverence to her, which agrees not to the following clause, wherein the same phrase is understood concerning her husband. Or rather,

2. That they may seriously and industriously apply themselves to the work of setting forth her praises, as this phrase is used, Gen\_37:25 Exo\_2:17, and oft elsewhere. For sitting being commonly the posture of idleness, men that set about any work are said to rise in order thereunto.

**Call her blessed,** both for her own excellency, and for many happy fruits which they have gathered from her wise and godly education.

**He praiseth her,** in the following words.

Proverbs 31:29

**Daughters;** daughters of men, i.e. women, so called also Gen\_34:1 Eze\_30:18.

**Thou excellest them all:** he esteems it but just that his praises should bear proportion to her real and manifold perfections.

Proverbs 31:30

**Favour;** comeliness; or, as the next clause explains it, beauty, which commonly gives women favour or acceptation with those who behold them. These are the words either,

1. Of her husband, continuing to praise her. Or,

2. Of Bathsheba, giving the sum of what she had said in few words.

**Is deceitful;** partly, because it gives a false representation of the person, being oftentimes a cover to a most deformed soul, and to many evil and hateful qualities; partly, because it doth not give a man that content and satisfaction which at first view he promised

to himself from it; and partly, because it is soon lost, not only by death, but by many diseases and contingencies.

**That feareth the Lord;** which character is here mentioned either,

1. As the crown of all her perfections. Or,
2. As a key to understand the foregoing passage of that wisdom, and fidelity, and diligence, which proceeded from or is accompanied with the fear of God.

Proverbs 31:31

**Give her of the fruit of her hands;** it is but just and fit that she should enjoy those benefits and praises which her excellent labours deserve.

**Let her own works praise her;** give her the praises which her own works may challenge. If men be silent, the lasting effects of her prudence and diligence will loudly trumpet forth her praises.

**In the gates;** in the most public and solemn assemblies.