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SOLOMON'S ETHICS,

OR THE

B O O K

OF

P R O V E R B S

MADE EASY.

SOLOMON'S ETHICS,

OR THE

B O O K

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P R O V E R B S

MADE EASY;

A SCHOOL BOOK,

*And seasonable Present for the Youth of both
Sexes, from such as can spare.*

By WILLIAM DALRYMPLE, D. D.

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF AIR.

THE profits, if any, to go into a contribution for the WIDOWS
and CHILDREN of the brave SEAMEN and MARINES who fell in
the late GLORIOUS ACTION on the first of August, 1798, under
ADMIRAL SIR HORATIO NELSON, now LORD NELSON.



AIR:

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1799.

101. i. 76.

DEDICATION.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

F L O R A,

COUNTESS OF LOUDON.

My Lady,

WHEN I first intended doing myself the honour of inscribing this little Manual to your LADYSHIP, it was meant to be just in so many words; but a late affecting loss, which you in particular, and a circle of numerous dear Friends, have sustained, calls for a public sympathy and condolence. At the same time, I join in thanks to a *most gracious God*, that the late worthy LADY DUMFRIES lived so long as to be an instructor from affection and choice,

in that period of life which usually * forms the character; and to be a shining example of religious and moral duty. If what has been done to illustrate the short, but comprehensive system of ETHICS, that has stood the test of so many ages, should prove a mean of relief for the present, or spiritual entertainment at any time hereafter, it will give no small pleasure to an old Pastor, who, from earliest years, has been warmly attached to the house of LOUDON.

I have, *My Lady*, the honour of subscribing myself, with all due respect and esteem,

Your Ladyship's obliged,

And most obedient servant,

WILLIAM DALRYMPLE.

AIR, June 10th, }
1799. }

* Prov. xxii. 6.

P R E F A C E.

THIS *sacred book* has generally, if not universally, been ascribed to *Solomon*, both in former and later times. The commendations of his *wisdom* may be seen and ought to be read out of 1 Kings iii. 12.—iv. 29. It is recorded of him in particular, that *God* gave *Solomon* wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is upon the sea-shore. The meaning of which may be, that his knowledge extended to subjects of every kind; or, that as the sand of the sea bounds the several coasts of continents and islands, so did his mind comprehend most things relative to both beauty and use. The ancient records we have confirm each of these interpretations. Indeed, though all things else of *Solomon's* had perished, as it is certain most of them have done, this *book of Proverbs* furnishes sufficient proof; for these, having stood the test of ages, evince a thorough discernment not only of *human nature*, but of *customs* and things most extensive.

From the manner in which *Proverbs* are written, a degree of obscurity is unavoidable; as they express a great deal, in a small compass, for the sake of impression, and to be remembered with ease. Hence, a wise hearer and reader will find matter to enlarge upon. And hence too, at some distance of time, it becomes an arduous task to illustrate properly. In some cases, a *probable sense* must be put up with. In others a more *vague conjecture*.

The observations made by our *sacred writer* reach to various subjects; but are most frequent and minute with regard to pious and moral conduct. This raises their value very high; and they who are entering upon life

cannot be too familiar with them. When once they are understood and felt, they apply upon every emergence, and with the utmost facility. They carry their own evidence along with them. They operate next to irresistibly. Like small seeds of natural bodies, they expand by thought, and bring forth much glorious fruit. Or, to use another similitude, from the well known heathen moralist, *Seneca*, Like a spark gently blown upon, they brighten into a flame. Add to all this, from the same good author, upon the whole, that such kind of instruction is well suited to the bulk of mankind, who enjoy the fewest advantages. They answer better than long discourse.

Wherefore, if *select Proverbs* are to be got by heart, and this surely should be recommended, the text, and not the illustrations, ought to have such honour put upon them. Indeed the last of these will aid the former

Explanatory notes are referred to by marks, like *, †, ‡, §, &c. Those which have *H.* after them are taken from *Doctor Hodge's* late elegant new version of the *Proverbs*; which will no doubt be agreeable to him. He has printed for the *rich* chiefly, and one would willingly acquaint the *poor* with what is so valuable.

Prior to the *practical reflections* is a word or two, denoting what they principally treat of; and accommodated to the *Index*. Having found considerable advantage in early life, from *Cyrus' Travels*, written by *Chevalier Ramsay*, a learned townsman, some good sentences are taken from this, and marked with the letter *R.* Devout requests, also, are here and there intermixed, on purpose to lead the *young* to a taste of this sort. To the *candid* of every age, under *God's* implored blessing, the whole is commended.

SOLOMON'S ETHICS,

OR THE

BOOK

OF

PROVERBS

MADE EASY.

CHAP. I.

From ver. 1st, to 7th.

THE * Proverbs of Solomon †, The *eminent* son of David, whom Almighty God did choose from † low outward estate, to be King of Israel §. To know every kind of pleasant useful wisdom ¶, and instruction for the avoid-

NOTES.

* Some, parables, or comparisons. Here to be understood of short, comprehensive pithy sayings, Matth. xiii. 35. Psal. lxxviii. 2. For most part, they have no designed connection. † 1 Kings iii. 5, &c.—iv. 3. ‡ Psal. lxxxix. 20. § The descendants of old Jacob, or Israel; being twelve Tribes in whole. ¶ Most of these words, to an English ear, have much the same meaning; but the original distinction, it is hoped the paraphrase will not be considerably deficient in.

REFLECTIONS.

Sayings of noble excellence, and by one of renown, have just claim to peculiar honour.

Of all knowledge, what belongs to sound piety and morals is of highest moment; see ver. vii.

B

great advantages, they shall, from their visible precious fruits be as an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains of highest cost about thy neck.

FROM VERSE X. to XX.

- 10 My beloved son, if old hardened sinners entice thee, by fair promises of instant pleasurable ease, to follow their example, consent thou
11 not for a moment, but rather abhor them. If, using the argument of riches too, they say, Come, join in league with us for mutual advantage; let us lay wait even for blood; let us, to prevent suspicion, lurk privily in our prepared place for devouring the innocent without other cause
12 than their enormous wealth. Let us, rising above affected silly scruples, and in defiance of mere cob-web laws, swallow them up alive, as

REFLECTIONS.

ficial impression; Psal. cxli. 4, 5. Almighty God himself doth cast the jewels of religious virtue. Tender age is the time to learn. Blessed be thy pure parental name, who hast given to reason and conscience a throne in our souls, that by them we may command all our inferior powers; and thus rightly live. Make us sensible of the important design for which we exist; that we may, before we die, lay such a foundation as we would be willing should abide unto eternity!

- 10 *Artful enticing sinners.* The slaves of vice do what they can to ensnare others; and to palliate gross crimes. One is in great danger, who does not fear. *Parental testimony* should be held as sacred. It argues true friendship, to provide against deceitful appearances. The hope of being undiscovered ruins thousands.
12 One vice naturally, and almost necessarily, leads to another, till the heart becomes hardened.

does the grave, and whole too*, for greater security. as those that go down to the dark unfathomable pit. Then, oh then, we shall find, 13
 by one act of prowess all necessary, precious substance, to lay out as we list; nay more, we shall fill our houses with spoil of a night, and so dexterously concealed. Think of these things, 14
 my young hopeful friend, cast in thy lot among us, and let us all hereafter have one purse, even you to share as an equal, who as yet have contributed least. My dear unexperienced son, walk 15
 not thou in the way with them; but instantly refrain thy foot from their hideously proposed path. For, fair to seduce as their speeches are, let 16
 the heart of tenderest truth assure you, that their feet run fast on to dreadful ruinous evil; and, for sake of unlawful purchases, make cruel haste to shed blood. (Surely you will advert to what I say 17
 since in vain the ensnaring net is spread in the sight of any simple little bird; but flies to escape.) And, if you should be more simple, it will be found 18
 in the end, that they, though unintentionally, lay

* Compare, Gen. vi. 9. Ex. xii. 5. 2 Sam. ii. 24. H.

REFLECTIONS.

Love for money is the root of all evil. 13

Ever suspect the apparent generousities of selfish men. 14

They who court infection, from levity, or love of wit, 15
 must pay sore for it in the end.

Vicious expence is boundless, and leads to execrable 16
 schemes. Delay of punishment doth often render it, at last, the more severe; Jam. v. 1. and 1 Tim. vi. 9.

Plain hazards require little sagacity to avoid them, 17
 Ha. i. 3.

They take vengeance upon themselves, whom 18

certain wait for their own blood: they lurk privily, as sure as ever they did to injure others, for their own justly hated and hateful lives.

- 19 So indeed are the destructive ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which, without scruple, taketh away the life of the righteous owners thereof, rather than want success to their infamous plans.*

FROM VERSE XX. to XXIV.

- 20 WISDOM †, the surest antidote to such immoderate measures, crieth earnestly without doors ‡, for guarding all her beloved children; she thus

* Or seduceth the soul of those who are addicted to the love of it; compare, Prov. vi. 25—xxiii. 22. Eccl. x. 11. H.

† See Psal. cxix. 36, 37. elegantly personified. ‡ She cries by conscience, reason, good and bad examples; and above all, by the infallible word of God: Rom ii. 14, 15. Compare, Prov. ix. 7—24. ix—15, 12. H.

REFLECTIONS.

neither fair warnings nor examples of justice will reclaim, Psal. vii. 15, 16. Jer. xvii. 11. What a comfortless life is that of *sin*? Self convicted, fearful of discovery, obnoxious to vengeance, suspended over hell. It makes an *earth-worm* of what was meant to be an *angel*; and fills with the *malice* and *cruelty* of a *devil*. Enable us, O our God, to maintain that body, which is the instrument and mansion of the soul, fit for the use and service of such a divine inhabitant, that we may not wrong ourselves, by living without a just distinction and distance from the beasts that perish! Settle such a constitution and state of mind in us, by the practice of righteousness, as may at last be consummate in endless felicity.

- 20 Advantages of wisdom. An effectual check to the immoderate love of riches is the earnest pursuit of wisdom. Seducers hide their real designs, whereas true knowledge is open, bold and free.

uttereth her voice even in the open streets :
 She crieth with peculiar zeal in the chief place 21
 of concourse for public religious instruction, in
 the openings of the gates too, where courts of
 civil justice are held : in the heart of the city
 among people of highest rank she boldly uttereth
 her words, saying, How long ye simple cre- 22
 dulous ones will ye love to suffer from such cri-
 minal simplicity? And, through time, to go the
 length of impudent scorers who delight in
 their scorning, and who with obstinate harden-
 ed fools hate the most valuable of all know-
 ledge? Ah, turn ye now. or it may be never, 23
 at my tender parental reproof: behold still, if
 ye yield, I will largely pour out my enlightening
 spirit unto you; I will make known the full
 sense and power of my authoritative words unto
 you.

REFLECTIONS.

The mean subterfuges of vice should ever be clearly 21
 and earnestly spoken unto. Affairs of consequence can-
 not be transacted without just rules.

Complaints of prevailing guilt ought to be accom- 22
 panied with kind reproof, and encouragements to
 amend, Psal. cxix. 59, 60 People who scorn what is
 good, neither feel shame, nor remorse. Such fly from
 the means of conviction too. Progress from bad to
 worse is common and alarming. Importunity of friends
 should rise with foreseen danger. All who hate practi-
 cal knowledge must hate her faithful servants.

A thorough good change, under God, will follow 23
 speedy return from evil, Heb. viii. 10.

Most glorious Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh,
 in subordination to whom alone we can regularly act;
 we depend upon thee, for the promised communications
 of thy divine aids. O number us not among those who
 are apostates from thee by their incorrigible wickedness!

FROM VERSE XXIV. to the END.

- 24 *AFTER* all, if you turn not from evil, then proffered grace itself will become your accuser, and say, because I have often affectionately called you to amend, and ye refused to hearken: I have even stretched out my hands, as desirous to lay hold of you, and no man, as they should have done, regarded my most solemn entreaties:
- 25 but ye transgressors have set at nought all my good counsel, and would have none of my
- 26 just reproof: I also, in return, will appear to laugh at your calamity from vice, and even I will mock * as one in rage when your fear of the
- 27 worst cometh: When your fear of full punishment cometh as desolation itself, and your entire destruction cometh as a tempestuous whirlwind†: when distress in keenest anguish cometh
- 28 irresistibly upon you. Then shall they who

* In allusion to the manner of man's passions, God is here spoken of; on purpose to affect deeply: *Psal. ii. 4. Prov. xiv. 32.* † This fastens together on every side; and is expressive of both inward and outward pain.

REFLECTIONS.

- 24 *Business.* The proper season for any thing important neglected is often fatal. In what is spiritual means of conviction are avoided, for the sake of false ease.
- 25 To hear without a view to right practice is worse than useless. To ridicule is monstrous. Mocking is the very summit of resentment. In Almighty God, passion, the feeling of a weak nature, cannot exist.
- 26 Divine comforts abstracted seem like total disregard.
- 27 Then imagination presents nothing but what is dreadful.
- 28 Death-bed horrors and exclamations have in them

have been most daringly obstinate, call upon me for deliverance; but I will not answer them in peace: they shall seek me, under yet more deadly apprehensions early, but they shall not find me favourable: for that they hated know- 29
ledge in due season; and did not choose, when they had power, and opportunity given, the true efficacious fear of the Lord. They would 30
have regard to none of my wise counsel, to live well and happy, but with mad insult despised all my earnest parental reproof. Therefore shall 31
they finally be left to eat of the natural bitter fruit of their own evil way; and be filled as to the brim with what must flow from their own impious immoral devices. For, waving every 32
*thing else of positive punishment, the turning away itself of the careless * stubborn sinner, shall stay them without remedy; and the short precarious † prosperity of wicked fools shall*

* See Jer. viii. 5. H. † Some indifference; Job xx. 20—21, 23. H.

REFLECTIONS.

somewhat of the nature of hell. Seldom, if ever, do they make any real change of inward temper. John vii. 34.—viii. 21.

The chief obstacle to religious knowledge is aversion to what is good; John iii. 19. Such are altogether unworthy of a miracle. 29 30

Final prosperousness in vice is impossible. Gal. vi. 6, 7. 31
 Sinners will be glutted with what they sought after with greatest industry. They need nothing foreign or outward to punish them.

Plenty itself serves but to supply the means of vice 32
 and wretchedness.

- 33 *thus destroy them. But whoso, in good time, and under the power of obedient faith, hearkeneth unto me, shall dwell safely, amidst those ruinous profligate issues; and shall be quiet from any fear of evil.*

C H A P. II.

FROM VERSE I. to X.

- 1 **M***Y dear dutiful son, know, for thine encouragement, that, if thou wilt continue to receive my instructive words, thou shalt, in time, so value, as to lay up, and hide in thy breast,*

REFLECTIONS.

- 33 Those do hearken with profit to religious rules, who follow them up to practice, and no other.

We knew, O Lord, that the foundation of misery was laid in sin, and that we could not escape from this misery without repentance; that our time passes quickly away, and that we could not do a work of leisure when a few distressed and encumbered hours only did remain: yet, alas, we deferred the great work of our souls, as if that could have been done in a moment, or was to be done upon us without ourselves; hereby adding the hardness of our hearts, to the difficulty of our reformation and amendment. Convince us, good God, that the passions of fear and sorrow, which danger, and the prospect of eternity extort from us, make no more religious change in men upon earth, than they do in those who are confined to the place of torment.

- 1 *Knowledge, how to be obtained. To distinguish truth from falsehood, upon proper evidence, is becoming men; and honours Almighty God. Duty with interest have claim to our warmest retentive affections.*

my commandments with thee, *as the most precious of all treasure*; So that thou wilt more and more 2
 incline thine *attentive* ear unto the rules of di-
 vine wisdom, and apply thine heart *itself* to
 the full understanding of them. Yea, if, from 3
 so good a frame, thou criest after still clearer
 knowledge, by diligent use of proper means; and
 liftest up thy voice in prayer for addi-
 tional understanding: If, in these ways, thou 4
 seekest her with unremitting care and labour, as
 men of the world do after silver; and even
 searchest for her, as for expected hid treasures:
 then, without all peradventure, shalt thou un- 5
 derstand from experience the true filial fear* of
 the Lord; and find the saving knowledge of
 God who is invisible. For the Lord Jehovah 6
 giveth perfect wisdom unto all such; and out
 of his own mouth cometh certain inspired
 knowledge, and profitable understanding. He 7
 layeth up plenteously of sound wholesome wis-
 dom for improvement of the righteous, and thus,

* Often put for the whole of religion.

REFLECTIONS.

Abstract, therefore, as much as may be, from visible 2
 things, vicious prejudice and evil counsel.

The most ardent devotion should accompany our 3
 own best endeavours, Matth. vi. 33.—vii. 7, &c. Psal.
 xliii. 3, 4. 1 Kings iii. 6, &c.

Wisdom is more substantial and durable, than all riches. 4

Strong affection makes light of difficulties. 5

A just habitual sense of deity is the source and sup- 6
 port of every thing good; Job xxviii. 28. Eccl. xii. 13.

Certainty of success, animates: Jam, i. 5, 17. Solid 7
 knowledge makes wise for eternity; ver. 7. and assimi-
 lates the soul of man to God.

as objects of his best love, he is a sure defensive buckler to them that continue to walk uprightly, from the hatred and violence of their worst
 8 *enemies. He keepeth the whole paths of those who act with proper guided judgement; and preserveth unto the end, the pure way of his*
 9 *saints. Then, of course, thou shalt understand more and more, how sweet and joyous all sorts of righteousness are: judgement and equity towards men, in particular, so often neglected: yea, and every good path, leading to pleasure and endless bliss.*

FROM VERSE X. to the END.

10 *WHEN wisdom, to direct life, entereth deep into thine heart, and devout knowledge, above*
 11 *every other, is pleasant unto thy soul: Discre-*

REFLECTIONS.

8, 9 Afflictions themselves do forward the upright to heaven, Psal. xxxi. 19, &c.—lxxxiv. 12.—cxxi. 4. The pleasures of religion pass all understanding of the wicked; Job xxvii. 5, &c. Rom. xiv. 17, 22. Love is the parent of attention and diligence.

Grant, O Lord, that the repeated impressions of religious worship may establish an abiding constitution, temper and complexion in us; and may become a vital and divine principle. Let us not become carnal and secular, by our converse with what is sensible and earthly; but become to that degree spiritual, that we may do thy will on earth, as the holy angels do it in heaven!

10 *Advantages of religious wisdom.* Divine knowledge is pleasant, both on its own account and on account of its salutary effects.

11 Prudence takes advice, and studies proper honest means; Eph. v. 12. Isa. lli. 13. To suspect danger is wisely to consult our own interest. Motives to holiness

tion shall *so guard, by means of both, as to pre-*
serve thee safe even in hazardous circumstances,
understanding at hand shall keep thee firm to
what is right: To deliver thee from falling 12
into the way of the evil seducing man, from
*the man that speaketh false * froward things,*
for support to his loose impious measures; Who 13
leave the paths of known † uprightness, to
walk in the prohibited dangerous ‡ ways of dark-
ness. Who, *at length,* rejoice to do evil, and 14
delight in hearing § the disingenuous froward-
ness of the wicked. Whose ways are *detesta-* 15
bly || crooked, and they notwithstanding obsti-
nately froward in their ill chosen paths. To de- 16
liver thee also from the strange whorish woman,
even from the harlot, stranger to thy person and

* *Guile and artifice which turns every way; Gen. iii. 34.*
H. † Sincerity. H. ‡ Ignorance and error. § Their
evil maxims and manners discoursed of. || Uncertain and not
to be depended upon; false and unjust.

REFLECTIONS.

rightly understood, are a sufficient balance against temptations. It is a good sign, to hear of this subject with pleasure.

Likewise greatly below a rational creature, to be in 12
 love with error. Men of violence, and infidel wit, would
 take the lead of many simple young. Early religion is
 the most effectual guard against them.

This course is plain, straight, and free of embarrass 13
 ment. If we leave conscience and scripture, all is dark-
 ness of error; Rev. iii. 15, 16. Rom. xiii. 12, &c.

Love of money, and sensual pleasure, ruin the bulk 14
 of mankind. To be tempted is no sin; but only when 15
 we yield; Jam. i. 13, 14.

Immodesty in women is unnatural; and especially 16
 after marriage. Their flatteries are peculiarly ha-
 zardous. True fortitude in youth, is to flee from such.

character, which, in soft manner, and for the worst of purposes, flattereth all she meets with
 17 her words of praise: Which immodestly forsaketh the fond guide of her youth, and, through repetition of what is vile, forgetteth to act in conformity to the sacred and sworn covenant of her God. For her adulterous house inclineth *her* unto premature hideous death, and her paths unforsaken, lead down unto the
 19 places of the miserable dead. None out of many that once go unto her lewd measures, return again, by genuine cordial amendment; neither take they firm hold* of the pure and holy
 20 paths of a new, safe and happy life. That avoiding both of the above, thou mayest be free to enter upon, and walk in the way of good, pious and benevolent men, and keep the paths of
 21 the inflexible righteous. For believe the word of a parent, the plain ingenuous upright shall dwell with credit in the land, and the perfect
 22 of that sort shall remain long in it. But the

† Compare Psal. liii. 4. lxxxviii. 5, 7. Zeph. i. 6. H.

REFLECTIONS.

- 17 The violation of chastity seldom stops in its career; 1 Cor. xi. 8. A double future vengeance awaits forgetfulness of clear and strong ties.
- 18 Fellowship with vice cannot too much be hated.
- 19 Abuse of reason doth issue in spiritual death; and often likewise, in that which is bodily; Gal. vi. 6, 7. Rom. viii. 5, &c. Foretastes of final wretchedness are not sure signs of a thorough change; Eccl. viii. 28.
- 20 True wisdom leads to eminence of religious virtue. Companionship in holiness, is also of noble growth.
- 21 Health, plenty, and comfort, are the most native
- 22 fruits of a good life; Deut. xi. 8, &c. Psal. xxxvii. 3, 4.

wicked of heart and practice shall soon be cut off from the earth; and the more assiduous transgressors of God's law, shall be quite † rooted out of it, in their existence and pleasant remembrance together.

C H A P. III.

FROM VERSE I. to V.

MY dear son, forget not on any account my law of tenderneſs; but let thine heart eſteem, love and keep all my command-

† Plucked up.

REFLECTIONS.

Heaven is yet more certain; Matth. v. 6.—vi. 33. The memory of the wicked is nauseous, and their end destruction; Deut. xi. 17. Pſal. xxxvii. 36. Phil. iii. 17, &c. 1 Pet. ii. 11. Hoſ. iv. 11. What ſo horrible, as a perjured adultereſs! Early marriage, in the fear of God, is a great preſervative to virtue.

Grant, O Lord, that we may ſo maintain the empire of reaſon, and conſcience, as no ſenſations, nor paſſions may uſurp the ſupremacy in us; and carry us from our ſubjection to the vicegerent of thee, *our God*. As taught and obliged by the *gospel grace*, may we deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world, looking for the bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearance of *the great God, and our Saviour, Jeſus Chriſt*, who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Advantages of a good life. Some virtues do, in eſpecial manner, conduce to preſent profit; Deut. xxx. 15, &c. Genuine religious inſtructors, are affectionately parental.

- 2 ments: for in common it will be found that length of days, and long life, and outward peace * to enjoy these, shall they add to thee.
- 3 Let not works of mercy † in particular, and steadfast truth of dealing, forsake thee; but bind them, as it were, about thy neck ‡, by way of ornament, and write what is due to them upon
- 4 the inmost table of thine heart. So shalt thou find acts of favour, and the sure reputation of good understanding in the sight of an omniscient infallible God, and all sagacious holy men.

* Or, all manner of happiness; John xiv. 27. † Comprehending our whole duties to men; Mic. vi. 8. ‡ So signs and frontlets anciently were worn; Ex. xiii. 9. Deut. vi. 8. Compare Job xxxiv. 27. H.

REFLECTIONS.

- Love makes memory, and increases it: Isa. xxxii. 8. Lessons should be laid up for all emergencies, when either we read, or hear: Jam i. 23, &c. Job xxii. 22.
- 2 Defective virtue may require chastisements, which life and immortality do abundantly compensate. Peace of mind is more than length of days, and more certain likewise.
- 3 The fruits of regular compassion excel strict justice, Rom. v. 7, &c. 2 Tim. i. 5. Regard to Almighty God, in social duties, doth sanctify and bless them. It turns a civil into a moral, and a moral into a religious work. Regard to truth in every case, should be sweetly tempered with sympathetic love.
- 4 He who denies himself, for the sake of others, has a witness of high acceptable worth in his own mind, Psal. xli. 1, &c. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. It is also captivating, and brings multitudes in debt, 1 Pet. iii. 13. Matth. v. 7. Rom. xiv. 18. Let fame follow goodness, and not be pursued as a chief end. They who abound most in this world, do often enjoy it least. Therefore, religious virtue ought to be a chief concern of all good parents. Piety and justice are close conjoined.

FROM VERSE V. to VII.

*EVEN whilst performing what is good, trust 5
in the Lord for guidance and success, with all
thine heart: and lean not too confidently unto
thine own understanding. In all thy ways 6
of endeavour after eminent advantages, acknow-
ledge the over-ruling providence of him, by hum-
ble devout requests; and he who is infinite and
infallible shall direct thy paths to a safe and
honourable issue.*

FROM VERSE VII. to XI.

BE not wise, therefore, in thine own imper- 7

REFLECTIONS.

Move us, O great and merciful God, by the mutual example of each other, to adore thee; and to love *men* for that of *thee* which is in them! Assure our hearts of thee, O Lord, that thou canst no more vary from *right* in any act of thine, than thou canst vary from *thyself*.

Trust in God with prayer. No circumstance in ma- 5
nagement can be so *prudential*, as to seclude the necessity of *divine aid*, Psal. xxxvii. 3, 5. The shortest seeming road to honour and wealth is often that to ruin.

The calm modest approbation of our own conduct, 6
with certain final success, is solid, lasting joy.

In all the addresses, *Holy Father*, which we make unto thee, may we feel such impresses of thy image upon our souls, as will enlarge our veneration of thy majesty, and our longings after the complete, and nearest, and eternal, and uninterrupted converse with thee in heaven! Suffer us not to rest in the *means*, without attaining the *end*; but let *religious exercises* have their full and proper effect, to reform and sanctify us, by the practice of all goodness, righteousness and truth.

Humility, the fear of God, and beneficence. Nothing 7

- fect eyes of discernment: reverently fear the one supreme Lord, and depart from that evil,*
 8 *which he ever abhors. It shall be like the prime source of health to thy * navel, and moistening marrow to thy bones, for increase of strength.*
 9 *And as you thus succeed, yield honour to the Lord with a proper division of thy substance, and with the very † first-fruits of all thine increase. So in place of loss from thence, shall thy*
 10 *barns be filled with plenty of necessary grains; and thy well stored grape presses shall burst out with an overflow of new wine.*

* *The earliest conveyance of nourishment; Ezek. xvi. 4.*

† *Or chief oblations for Priests, Ex. xxiii. 19. Deut. xxviii. 2, &c.*

REFLECTIONS.

should move us to deviate from the straight line of *Almighty God*. The more people offend, the more anxious they are, to find out plausible defences. A sure sovereign antidote is the habitual sense of divine inspection, cherished by frequent worship.

- 8 Obedience is the surest mean of happiness, and the most immediate. They who can live with moderation, have few pressing demands. Their spirits are cheerful. In sickness, they have glorious quieting resources.

- 9, 10 He who is the *one Supreme* is our sole unalienable proprietor. The *charitable* are divine faithful stewards. It is by *love*, and not *quantity*, that our *alms* are estimated. *Economy* is a plentiful spring of *liberal deeds*. Psal. cxii. 1, &c.—xli. 1, &c. Monuments of mercy survive often to the benefit of childrens children. The most justifiable of all *usuries*, Eccl. xi. 1, &c. A medicine to life, and ornament of worship, Matth. iii. 8.

We praise thee, *O God*, the author of all good, who has made us men for the imitation of thee in righteousness and holiness; and for the participation of thee thereby: so that the most connatural employment of our

FROM VERSE XI. to XIII.

MY dear son, should even divine promises, at 11
 times, seem to fail of their accomplishment ; despise
 not thou, through carelessness, the wise profitable
 chastening of the Lord: neither be weary from
 the greatness, or lengthening out of his correc-
 tion. For however unlikely it may appear, whom 12
 the good and gracious Lord most tenderly loveth,
 he correcteth for a little, even as a father
 amongst ourselves the son, in whom he de-
 lighteth above every other.

FROM VERSE XIII. to XXI.

UPON the whole, happy, in each respect, is 13
 the man that findeth practical wisdom, and

REFLECTIONS.

highest faculties is about thee ; and we can never so per-
 fectly enjoy ourselves, as when we most enjoy thee !

Trials necessary. All trouble is dealt out in wisdom 11
 and love, Job v. 6. God would have the wicked to
 amend by them ; and the best to improve.

None have a right to choose either the kinds or the 12
 measures of their trials. Impatience aggravates distress.
 They who foresee, and prepare for the worst, are half
 armed, Amos iii. 2. Such guard at once against secu-
 rity and despair.

Wherefore, O thou God of Peace, who broughtest
 again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great
 Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the ever-
 lasting covenant ; make us perfect in every good work
 to do thy will : working in us that which is well pleas-
 ing in thy sight, through Jesus Christ. To whom be
 glory for ever and ever.

Advantages of practical wisdom. True means of enjoy- 13
 ment are put into every ones powers. Wisdom is the

- the man that getteth * understanding, by diligent search. For the successful merchandise of it † is better than the merchandise of coveted silver is able to purchase, and the gain thereof than even what can be acquired by fine gold. She is in herself more precious than bright shining rubies; and all the things else thou canst be moved to desire, are not once to be compared unto her. Like a lady of chief distinction, she holds out length of joyous days in her right hand: and in her left hand, riches and honour respectable. Her ways of living throughout are ways of pure lasting plea-

* Draweth out understanding, Prov. viii. 35. Prudence.

† Compare Gen. xxxiv. 10. H. Some, burst forth. H. Gen. xvii. 11.

REFLECTIONS.

proper use of *understanding*, in opposition to a learned wicked fool, Prov. xxiii. 23. Seek the best occasions for sound knowledge, and dread to lose any.

- 14 No goods of the *body* can equal those of the *mind*.

- 15 Gold and rubies serve chiefly for mere shew, Esth. iii. 8.—v. 13.—vii. 4. Whereas *wisdom*, in exercise, constitutes divine beauty, usefulness, and joy, 1 Tim. ii. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 3, &c. Hence, too, looks are rendered sweet, and captivating.

- 16 Health is a blessing of prime regard, and is, for most part, connected with prudence, moderation, contentedness and humility, Matth. vi. 33. How numerous are the toils and deaths occasioned by intemperance? Our chief seat of riches is in the soul.

- 17 Innocent pleasures of the world are not abridged by religion, but the contrary. A good conscience is a perpetual feast. Pious acts are noble, and sweet. How blissful is the exercise of *doing good*? Acts xx. 35. Phil. iv. 6, 7.

fantness; and all her *established* paths, are
fraught with inestimable peace. She is as a 18
beautiful tree of life richly covered with fruits,
 to them that lay hold upon her: and happy,
beyond expression, is every one, that retaineth
her to the end. The mighty Lord by *similar* 19
beneficent wisdom, hath founded the earth to
be inhabited; and by unmeasurable understand-
ing, hath he established the heavens, *like a ca-*
nope above it. By his *all-perfect* knowledge, 20
the hidden depths are broken up, in refreshful
fountains, streams and rivers of waters from them;
 and the *exhaled* clouds out of these, in their
course, drop down gently the *fructifying* dew.

FROM VERSE XXI. to XXVII.

MY dear docile son, whom an inclined ear 21
 has drawn so many useful lessons unto, let not

REFLECTIONS.

Present religious delights anticipate those which are 18
 perfect and everlasting, Prov. viii. 1, &c. They differ
 only in their measures, Rev. xxii. 14.

All the heavenly orbs are orderly and useful. Man's 19
 chief glory is to imitate the *fountain of love.* Matth. xi. 30. 20

We own, O eternal and glorious Lord God, that perfec-
 tion of wisdom, goodness, and power, by which thou
 didst, in the beginning, create all things: so that the
 beauties of thy nature shine forth in the works of thine
 hands. We praise and magnify thy love, who hast fitted
 us reasonable creatures for those relations which we
 stand in to thee, and to one another; so that the foun-
 dation of our duty is laid therein, and our happiness is
 promoted thereby.

Various religious advantages. Parental affection rises 21
 with good impressions formerly made. The more that
 virtue is contemplated, the more it enamours. Clear

- them *hereafter* depart from thine * eyes :
 keep sound *healing* wisdom and discretion of
 22 *behaviour to the last*. So shall they be life of
sweet enjoyment unto thy soul, and ornaments of
 23 *captivating* † grace to thy neck. Then shalt
 thou walk in thy way of *business* safely, and
 thy foot shall not stumble upon *hazards of vice*.
 24 When thou liest down after hours of labour,
 thou shalt not ‡ be afraid, either *outwardly or*
inwardly to the disturbance of rest; yea, thou
 shalt on the contrary lie down with *peace of mind*,
 25 and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid
 of sudden grounds to fear *what the malicious*
only have to expect. neither of the desolation
 of the *obstinate* wicked, when it apparently
 26 cometh nigh. For the Lord, in that *tremendous*
case, shall be thy confidence, and shall

* *Memory and thought, chap. ii. 7.* † *Alluding to the*
customary dress of that part, with precious jewels, Psal. xci. 3.
 ‡ *That is snared by sudden terror. H.*

REFLECTIONS.

- light of divine truth removes ill grounded painful suspi-
 cions. It can stand the test of minute inquiry.
- 22 Existence without enjoyment, is not living. Virtue
 inspires charitable winning beneficence, peaceful reflec-
 tions, and future good prospects. *Gems* need something
 better than themselves, to make one shine, Job xxix. 7, &c.
- 23 Cheerful dispatch waits upon a person of judgement,
 with good designs. Secure of divine approbation, what
 can hurt? Job vii. 19. Psal. cxxvii. 2,—xc. 1. Phil. ii. 28.
- 24 Love and beneficence do often charm the worst,
 1 Pet. iii. 13. Where cares are fewest, sleep is best.
- 25 The demands of *nature* are moderate, whereas *fancy*
 has no bounds.
- 26 God will either deliver or support, 1 Cor. x. 13.
 1 Pet. i. 9, &c. We should turn our eyes from the

*assuredly keep thy foot from being taken like
his, with a ruinous snare.*

FROM VERSE XXVII. to XXX.

WITHHOLD not *pure charitable good*, if 27
thou wouldst humbly and affectionately trust in Al-
mighty God, from them * to whom it is by his su-
preme appointment due, when it is in the power
of thine hand to do it *at the time*. Say not 28
unto thy *poor destitute neighbour*, who *solicits*
thine immediate aid, Go for *the present*, and
come again to me for *relief*, and to-morrow
perhaps, or soon after, I will give *what you want*;

* *Literally, the owners thereof. The deserving.*

REFLECTIONS.

stream to the fountain, and then think what he can do.
Rules of life ought ever to be in our eye.

Blessed be thou *our God*, whose laws of religion are
not mere determinations of pleasure, and arbitrary com-
mands of power; but the dictates of wisdom and designs
of goodness, beneficial and necessary!

Almsgiving. No unjust or uncharitable person has a 27
call to put their trust in a *good and gracious God*. Depen-
dences of a trading life, do not often admit of dilatory
payments, Rom. xiii. 8. All who are in want have a
claim of right, to be relieved by others, Matth. vii. 12.
Ex. xxii. 7, 14, 15. Deut. xv. 7, &c. *Times*, as well as
actions, are to be thought of. Where objects may be
known, they should be known. We are unjust, so long
as we delay. It is dreadful *sacrilege* to rob the hungry.

To-morrow may never come, and to die with a cruel 28
falsehood in one's mouth is hideous, Lev. xix. 13. Deut.
xxiv. 15. Jam. iv. 13. Where the desire of doing good
is strong, the terms of denial will be gentle. *Ends* are
always in our power, though the *means* are not.

- when thou hast it *in possession already* by thee.
- 29 Devise not *even in thought* evil of that, or indeed any other kind, against thy well known innocent neighbour, seeing he dwelleth in his own belief, securely by thee.

FROM VERSE XXX. to the END.

- 30 STRIVE not *through litigiousness, or inattention to small beginnings*, with a man of any kind, without a sufficient cause, and least of all, if it is certain he have done thee no harm.
- 31 And whereas success in vice doth often lead to this, envy thou it not in the oppressor of right, and choose from like expectations, none of his criminal ways. For the froward to act against equitable rules, is no less than abomination to the Lord: but his sure secret love is with the
- 32
- 33 beneficent righteous. The heavy curse of the

REFLECTIONS.

- 29 The more innocent and useful people are, it is the more maliciously cruel to hurt them. He withholds good who does not aid, to the utmost of his power, Lev. xviii. 19. Psal. vii. 4.
- 30 Strife and scorning. Small breaches are apt to widen, by every new thought. Fretful peevish natures do invent causes of dispute. The wise do easily overlook such as are real.
- 31 Few have the art of calmly seeking redress at law. Sober private conversation would prevent a world of mischief, Psal. xxxvii. 20, &c. Prov. xvi. 18.
- 32 Successful pride is too often flattered. Hidden blessings of heaven are the sweetest and most pure, 2 Sam. vii. 8.
- 33 Whole and great families suffer from oppressive gatherers. Sudden rises do often portend equal sudden over-

Lord *through time is sure to break forth* in the house of the *dishonest cruel wicked* * : but he *blesteth with smiles of regard* the habitation of the *steadfast* just. Surely of all others most, he 34
 scorneth by *abasements* the *impious* scorers ; but he giveth *large aiding* grace unto the lowly of heart. The *devoutly* wise shall inherit 35
certain glory for both worlds, but *no less certain* shame shall be the *unhappy* † promotion of fools.

* *The man of rapine. H.* † *Or lift them up to notice. H.*

REFLECTIONS.

throws. Leave not the fruits of an evil purchase to your children. The meanest house and income is more than all unrighteous splendor.

How alarming were divine judgements upon Pharaoh, 34
 Nebuchadnezzar and Herod? Lam. iii. 32. How gracious his dealings with Abraham, Job, Joseph, Elizabeth, Mary and others?

The flattering of fools may appear as promotion ; but 35
 it is worse than none. Prosperous vice is contemptible, Psal. iv. 6.

Consign us not, O thou most *wise and gracious* Creator, unto the state of those, who by consciousness of their guilt, and the malignity of their sin, are separated from, and incapable of the light of thy countenance ; but may we now, while it is called to-day, participate of thy righteousness, who art the fountain of all happiness and glory !

C H A P. IV.

FROM VERSE I. to XIV.

- 1 **H**EAR, O ye children of wisdom, the in-
struction of a dutiful affectionate fa-
ther, and attend with seriousness to know from
2 experience right understanding. For I give you
good wholesome doctrine to be directed by, forsake
3 you not on any account my law. For to this end,
consider that I was my father's son, as you are
now mine, yea tender to, and, as it were only be-
4 loved in the sight of my mother. He, justly
apprehending danger from such fondness, taught
me also, and said unto me, by way of prepara-
tion, let not only thine ear admit, but thine heart
itself retain my beneficial words; keep my
commandments, and live thereby in sure happi-
5 ness. Get early possession of wisdom, to discern

REFLECTIONS.

- 1 Paternal and filial affection. Good rules do specially aid
those who act in high difficult offices. True charity dic-
tates with meek yet glowing love. The worst of all in-
gratitude is to treat such with indifference. The voice of
affection is natural to true parentage, Jer. vi. 16.
2 The more we recollect good teachers, the more we will
3 esteem, and improve by their instructions. Youth has our
best claim to aid, Ex. iv. 22. 1 Chron. xxviii. 1, &c.—
xxix. 1, &c.
4 Faithful attention, and meditating, give great hope of
proficiency. To be contented is to live.
5 At any expence to this world, sound practical know-
ledge should be sought after, as what is perfective and
abiding, Matth. vi. 33.

*and get in like manner understanding clear for immediate use: forget it not when more advanced, neither decline by the clamorous urgencies of bodily appetite and sense, from the sublime perfecting words of my mouth. Forsake her not I pray, amidst unevenly slippery paths, and trust me as a father, she shall preserve thee: love her ardently and she shall keep thee up. Wisdom for obedience 7 is the principal thing, therefore get such wisdom at any expence; and with all thy getting for this world, get understanding how to use, so as not to abuse it. Exalt her in thy judicious 8 manly thoughts, and she shall promote thee to noble heights of virtue: she shall bring thee to honour and to act in such places, when thou dost embrace her with warm steadfast regard. She shall give to thine upright unashamed head 9 what may be compared to * an ornament of grace; yea, a crown of glory shall she deliver to compass thee. Hear, O my son, and 10 receive these my sayings with constant adherence; and the years of thy life shall be many, if not as to number, yet as to certain permanent*

* See chap. i. 9. Or things to be understood.

REFLECTIONS.

For beauty and benefit, nothing can equal religious virtue, Psal. cxi. 10. Build not upon doubtful principles, 7 Deut. xxxii. 7. Men ruin their greatest happiness, by making too much haste after the appearances of it. What so glorious, as to be like the Almighty?

Length of days should be measured by enjoyment, 8 Gen. xiv. 20. Hos. xi. 8.

Ignorance from love of vice is without excuse, John 10 iii. 19. 2 Pet. ii. 9, &c.

- 11 *advantages. Hitherto God and thy own conscience will bear witness, I have taught thee how to walk in the way of true wisdom; I have led thee, not without success, in right acceptable paths.*
- 12 *When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened by pressure of others; and when thou runnest after means either for private or public good, thou shalt not stumble so as to frustrate*
- 13 *them. Take fast hold of instruction, then let her not go from inferior motives. keep her nigh as a guard under every present trial, for after all, she is thy surest comforting life.*

FROM VERSE XIV. to XX.

- 14 *ENTER not for a moment into the known path of the wicked, and for love's sake, go not*
- 15 *on deliberately in the way of evil men. Avoid it rather, pass not if possible by its very con-*

REFLECTIONS.

- 11 *Progressive goodness gives ease, freedom, serenity,*
- 12 *Matth. xi. 29.*
- 13 *Virtuous resolution is instant and strong. Trifle not with what is momentous, Psal. cxix. 59, 60. Not to avoid known hazards is not to be sincere. The worst should not despair, Prov. iii. 8. Hab. i. 16. Attention ought to quicken with excellence of doctrine. The more pains parents have taken, the more they are to be loved, obeyed. Religious wisdom is to be estimated above all things, Matth. xi. 12. Phil. iii. 12, 13. Properly speaking, the wicked do not live, Luke xv. 32.*
- 14 *Virtue and vice compared. See last section at the end.*
- 15 *The way to ruin, by vice, is quick and certain, chap. i. 25. Abhorrence thereof is our best safety. Take warning from the earliest notice; and thus effectually discourage seducers.*

finer, but turn from it as quick as may be, and pass far away. For they whom evil habits have rendered callous, sleep not hardly for a night, except they have done one kind of mischief or another; and if they lie down without guilt, their sleep is taken away, yea unless they cause some one by their example to fall. For they eat as it were the bread of fraudulent wickedness, and drink the wine which cometh of extreme violence. But on the contrary, the pious equitable path of the just is sweetly directive as the shining light of heaven, that, from the time of its rise, shineth more and more even unto the perfect effulgence of noon-day. Compared with which, the way of the hardened wicked is as dismal darkness; so that they dash upon every hazard in their road, and know not at what they do unexpectedly stumble.

REFLECTIONS.

Contrivance and execution of villanies, are like sport to old sinners, chap. iii. 24.—ii 14. Numerous tempting occasions are no excuse to transgress like them.

Purchases for riot, out of blood and tears, will break in upon sleep at times.

Virtue and happiness are progressive, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12. At every new step they forbode more to all who observe them, Dan. xii. 3. They soon lose what they had, that do not abound more and more.

Wicked mens principles have no sound bottom, chap. i. 27.

Suffer us not, O thou pure and holy God, to fall into the most dreadful and horrid condition of such as are revolted from the holiness and happiness of heaven, and who, abiding in their guilt, must be for ever undone!

FROM VERSE XX. to XXIII.

- 20 MY *very dear son, let me again and again request that you attend to my words, which are the result of age and experience, incline thine*
 21 *anxious ear unto my affectionate sayings. Let them not, through dissipating means, depart from thine eyes; but rather keep them as in the midst of thine heart to be regularly applied.*
 22 For they are *the certain security of a well enjoyed life unto those that thus find them, and like medicinal health to all their flesh.*

FROM VERSE XXIII. to the END.

- 23 KEEP *then the inward man of thy * heart with all upright diligence; for out of it are*

* *Put for all human spiritual powers and faculties.*

REFLECTIONS.

- 20 *How to improve instruction.* Few things, if any, are so well entitled to a grateful return. Youth ought humbly to distrust itself, Jam. i. 21, &c.
 21 Desire to be edified proceedeth of love, Ch. iii. 21. Luke viii. 15.
 22 Learning and vice together must fearfully issue, 2 Pet. ii. 21. Obedience enlarges and strengthens sound wisdom, ver. xiii. Ch. iii. 18, 22. Moderation, contentedness and humility, are noble regimens even for bodily health. Curiosity is often a fatal disease of the human mind. R.
 23 *Rules of caution.* As inward prevailing motions are either good or ill; so must people's habitual conduct be, Psal. xxxiv. 15.—xxxvii. 27. A delicate branch of the religious character; and too generally overlooked, Psal. xxvi. 1, 2.

the *most prevailing* issues of *active* life. Put 24
 away from thee a froward *rash* mouth, and
 perverse *corrupting* lips *still more* put far from
 thee. Let thine eyes of *sober judgement* look 25
 right on *the rule of a pure life*, and let *what*
may be compared to thine *preservative* eye-lids,
 look *also* straight before thee. Ponder by *this* 26
means, the path of thy feet *through a hazardous*
world, and let all thy *virtuous* ways be esta-
 blished *after such manner as they ought*. Turn 27
 not upon any *consideration* to the right hand of
 God's *clear infallible order*, nor to the left of
 it; but *whenever what is tempting doth offer*,
 that *instant* remove thy foot from *prohibited*
 evil.

REFLECTIONS.

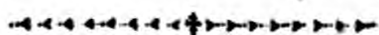
Unsuitable language proceeds from, and still farther 24
 corrupts a criminal heart. Inattention is no excuse,
 Col. iii. 8, 9.—iv 6. Be not familiar with evil-speakers.

The *eye* is a chief inlet to the *mind*. Beware of gaud- 25
 ing abroad. Immodest gestures are dangerous. Study
 rules of piety and virtue without prejudice.

Weigh well the nature and circumstances of each 26
 action.

Seek not pleasure out of the road of heaven. Un- 27
 reasonable curiosity renders people both unhappy and
 criminal. R.

May we, through thy grace, O *righteous Father*, consi-
 der wisely and timely what our *capacity* and what our *dan-*
ger is; and never rest in such practices of *sensuality* and
intemperance, as degrade men into beasts; or of such *pride*
and malice as transform men into devils.



CHAP. V.

FROM VERSE I. to III.

1 **M**Y son let me farther beseech, that you at-
tend unto my dear bought wisdom, and
bow thine ear with solicitude to my following
2 plain counsels of understanding. That thou
mayest regard discretion in youth, and that thy
lips afterwards may keep sound preservative
knowledge for the benefit of others.

FROM VERSE III. to XV.

3 FOR * *amongst many seducements*, the lips of

* Some, although, as in Ex. xiii. 17. Deut. xxix. 19. H.

REFLECTIONS.

1 Youth advised. The more hazardous and common temptations are, the more wise persuasive art is due from parental love, chap. iv. 20.—ii. 16. Be ever open to advice. A good teacher ought by all lawful means, to remove prejudice.

2 *Spiritual policy* is the best preservative from falling by subtle wicked snares. Noble purposes strengthen by new degrees of light, and are useful to many, Gen. xxxix. 9. *Credulity* is perceived too late. R.

Teach us by discovering the observations we have made, and the truths we have learned from the manifestations of thee *our God*, to represent thee to one another, as most worthy the celebrations of us all; and to join our voices and our hearts in the adoration of thee, from whom we have received our beings, and in whom is the centre of our repose.

3 *Immodest women to be shunned.* To gratify animal sense, beyond the bounds of reason, is not true nature. In 2

a strange *immodest* woman drop upon the *unwary* as an *enticing* honey-comb, and the word of her mouth when designed to captivate is smoother than *sweetest* oil. But her end being 4 accomplished is bitter as worm-wood itself, and sharp both to wound and to kill as a two-edged sword. Her feet, when followed after, go 5 down to premature death often: her steps continued in take fast hold on * hell. Lest thou 6 shouldest have time to ponder the path of pure preferable life, her ways are moveable between affected love, and the direct opposite evils, that thou canst not well know the danger of them.

* Compare Job xvii. 13. Ezek. xxxi. 16. All denoting the tomb. H.

REFLECTIONS.

woman it is peculiarly odious. The *sexes* thus corrupted go into most other crimes. A modest teachable mind is the most secure. Soft flattering speeches ought ever to alarm. An *ambuscade* is more hazardous, than an open flight.

Sensual issues are dreadful to ease, credit, business, 4 health and life. Young people should tremble for these. They buy repentance at the dearest rate, who delay it long, 1 Cor. vi. 9. Rev. xxi. 8, 22.

How seldom do the *voluptuous* amend. 5

The degrees and deceits of unhallowed delight are 6 scarcely to be numbered, chap. iv. 26. How different do they appear in the time of being tempted, and afterwards? To restrain *passion* is the true road to *happiness*. Advice is then effectual, when known means of *seduction* are fled from, chap. iv. 15.—ii. 18. Who should trust a person who is both filthy and cruel? The *unadvisable* must perish, Psal. i. 1, &c. How ridiculous for a *momentary pleasure* to hazard life! Gen. xxxix. 7, &c. Luke xv. 30. An *impure habit* will consume the largest income, chap. i. 28, &c.

- 7 Hear me now, therefore, by a wise deliberate choice, O ye children of my soul, and depart not even once from the unquestionable kind words of
 8 my mouth. Remove early and forever thy way of converse far from her, and come not
 9 nigh the door of her house to be tempted : Lest, as many before thee, thou injudiciously give thine youthful honour unto others who have no real affectionate claims, and thy years of base future wretchedness unto the cruel destructive
 10 ensnarer. Lest, as no less frequently happens, strangers and even aliens be filled with the prime of thy wealth, and the strength of thy labours for obtaining them be left a scandalous prey in the house of a vile detestable stranger.
 11 And thou † most horribly mourn at the last without hope, when thy flesh and poor remnants of thy ‡ body even to skin and bones are just
 12 about to be consumed. And say, under agonies of despair, O, how have I hated early parental instruction, and my mad insensible heart despised wholesome reproof? And have not
 13 obeyed the voice of my wise benevolent teachers, nor inclined mine attentive ear to them
 14 that most patiently instructed me? I || was in opposition to every joint effort of theirs, almost in all sorts of brutal evil, and in the midst of the congregation and assembly, who were met for similar bad purposes.

† See Jo. v. 29, 30. ‡ Compare Isa. x. 20. Neh. vi. 20. || Others translate as a criminal, I have been arraigned for every kind of offence before the tribunal and before the assembly. See Prov. x. 20. Gen. xxix. 18. Deut. xix. 21. H.

FROM VERSE XV. to XXII.

DRINK waters for natural relief out of 15
 thine own cistern; and what may be compared
 to refreshful running waters, out of thine own
 well. Let * amiable and useful children, the 16
 pure beneficial produce of thy fountains, be dis-
 pers'd abroad, and appear in the eyes of mankind
 like rivers of waters in the streets. Let them 17
 be only thine own, from mutual tender com-
 placence and not with justice suspected to come
 as from adulterous strangers with thee. Let 18
 thy chosen fountain be blessed by the care of a
 regular sworn affection, and thus rejoice as be-
 cometh, with the wife of thy youth. Let her 19
 be as the loving caressed hind † to its mate and
 favourite pleasant ‡ roe, let her breasts alone

* Some interrogatively, shall thy fountains flow abroad in
 the streets as rills of water? H. † Compare Prov. xviii.
 23. ‡ Wild-goat according to some, Psalm civ. 18. Job
 xxxix. 1.

REFLECTIONS.

Marriage, how to honour. The mutual inclination of 15
 the sexes is wise and beneficial, chap. ix. 17. Isa. li. 1, &c.
 Irregular sensual indulgences, notwithstanding, are mean
 and cruel. The fair and chaste are thus neglected.
 Spurious issues often more so. Parentage concealed fore-
 goes some of the sweetest natural pleasures.

Gratification, from choice and mutual constancy, is 16
 unallayed by inward checks.

A numerous undoubted progeny is quite endearing. 17

Like springs of plenty, they divide in time to mani- 18
 fold profitable branches, and are columns to the state,
 Psalms cxxvii. cxxviii.

How great are the consolations of mild family discourse, 19
 and united religious homage? Psal. cxli. 3, &c.

20 satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravished
 always with her *pure grateful* love. And *hav-*
ing such a nigh and just expectant of thy early
vowed regards, why wilt thou *so err* my dear
 son, as to be ravished with the *seductive mea-*
sures of a strange immodest woman, yea, and
 why *injudiciously* embrace the bosom of a *base*
 21 *barlot* stranger. For let the temptations of *se-*
crecy be ever so plausible, you ought to know and
 be deeply affected by it, that the ways of man
 are full before the eyes of the impartial judging
 Lord, and *that with this view*, to speak after the
 manner of men, he pondereth all his *secret no*
less than open goings.

FROM VERSE XXII. to the END.

22 *THE sure dreadful punishment of his own*
iniquities shall take as in a snare the wicked
 himself, and he shall be holden *like a captive*
 with the cords of his *multiplied atrocious* sins.

REFLECTIONS.

20 Divided *griefs* lessen, and communicated *joys* increase,
 Gen. ii. 18. Job xix. 13, &c. xviii, &c. See the above.
 21 *Almighty God* is more privy to what we think, speak
 and act, than ourselves are, Zech. iv. 10. 1 Cor. iv. 5.
 Seek a remedy for *impure* pleasure in *lawful marriage*.
 No excuse can be for *adulterous uncleanness*.

We trust in thee, *O thou most high*, that universal *right-*
eousness shall at last universally prevail, when those
 reasonable creatures which will not be holy and religious,
 shall be subject to an everlasting destruction from thy
 presence and the glory of thy power.

22 *Vice its own punishment.* Loose principles are the com-
 mon fruit of *bad lives*, and serve to harden, ver. 12.
 Esth. iii. 8.

He shall die by the strengthening of his evil ha- 23
bits, without being benefited by instruction,
and in the greatness of his irreclaimable folly,
he shall go wandering astray from mischief to
mischief, from hurt to hurt.

CHAP. VI.

FROM VERSE I. to VI.

MY son, whom I am anxious to warn in ear- 1
ly life, if thou, by haste of engagement,
or otherwise, be surety for thy friend; if yet
more unwarily thou hast * stricken thy pro-
mising hand with a mere stranger, Thou art, 2

* The Hebrew manner, Prov. v. 10.—vi. 26.—xx. 16.
—xxvii. 13.

REFLECTIONS.

Guilt after warning, doth greatly aggravate, Prov. 23
viii. 36.

Blessed be thou, O God, who hast exercised thy good-
ness in the production of thy creatures! Convince us of
the depravity which is brought upon human nature, by
vicious practices, and make us so thoroughly sensible of
the uneasiness of a guilty conscience and malignant spi-
rit, as to be moved unto the utmost zeal for restoration
by *repentance* to ourselves, and by *pardon*, to thy enriching
favour.

Surety avoid. Married people above every other 1
should be slow, thus to involve themselves, Psal. cxii. 5.
1 Tim. v. 8. Solicitation from want is full of artifice.

Trouble of mind is inseparable from rashness, and 2
often great outward loss. Courts of law resound with
such complaints of grievances. Rather give in part,

- take my parental word for it, next to already snar-
 ed with the *rash* words of thy mouth, thou
 3 art taken with the words of thy mouth. Do
 this now, *then* my † very dear son, *while there*
is any hope, and deliver thyself, when thou
 art come into the hand of thy friend engaged
 for : go, humble thyself, *if it were by prostra-*
tion to the earth, for riddance of the obligation,
 and make sure of thy depending friend to pay
 4 off what is due. Give not a single hour's sleep
 to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eye-lids,
 5 till this be done. Deliver thyself quite from the
 net, even as a roe entangled strives to get clear
 from the hand of the hastening hunter, yea
 and as a more weak and fearful bird from
 the hand of the fowler.

FROM VERSE VI. to XII.

- 6 UPON this weighty point in particular, go

† Compare Prov. v. 21. Job. ii. 12. 1 Sam. xiv. 24.
 Gen. xviii. 5. Isa. lx. 5. H.

REFLECTIONS.

- than bind for a whole. We should be certain of pos-
 sessing more than we engage for.
- 3 Suretyship is apt to make people remiss. We should
 request our freedom as humbly as another did our engage-
 ment.
- 4 It is a prime justice to know the utmost extent of our
 5 own outward estate. Deaths and losses in trade, may
 render difficulties inextricable, Prov. xxii. 7. 1 Thes.
 iv. 12.
- 6 Industry commended. Prudence and religion equally bind
 to take care of ourselves and of our families, 1 Tim. v. 8.
 The affluent should take leisure and pains to give good

to the ant *itself*, thou sluggard, consider her *judicious instructive* ways, and be *made* wise from them. Which having no *visible* guide, 7
 overseer, or ruler, in her *small domains*, Pro- 8
 videth *notwithstanding* a place for her meat in the *warmth* of summer, *maketh even avenues* thither, and then gathereth *fast* together her *store* of food in the harvest time of little grains. Thus *recollecting* may I not *expostulate*, how long 9
 wilt thou sleep *on to mischief*, O infamous sluggard? When wilt thou, *falsely luxurious*, arise out of thy sleep *amid't so much danger*? Yet 10
sayest thou by practice, a little more sleep if *possible*, a little slumber *at least*, a little folding of the hands *should nothing better be allowed*, to seek the next state of ease to sleep. So let the ob- 11
 servation of ages assure thee, shall thy *deserved* poverty come of a sudden, as one that travel-
 leth among the worst of robbers, and thy total want as *under the violence* of an armed man.

REFLECTIONS.

counsel, and to serve the poor. Poverty, from indolence or riot, is a great crime, Psal. cxxxvi. 25. Instructions from the book of nature may be signally useful to devout field and garden walks.

Animal instincts are orderly and harmonious. Opportunity should not be let slip. Sluggards are unna- 7
 tural and cumbersome. The very best incomes need to &c.
 be managed with care. Delay brings new difficulties, and lessens strength, Ch. xxiv. 33, &c.—xxx. 25. Pre-
 tence to weakness, is both common and false. An excess of sleep is criminal, Psal. civ. 21, 23. Prov. xiii. 4. Sudden evils are the most severe.

Teach us, O God, in this our day of grace, and while the terms of reconciliation are offered, to understand

FROM VERSE XII. to XVI.

- 12 A naughty *dissembling* person, and a wicked *cruel uncharitable* man, walketh with a
 13 froward mouth of *self-praise*. He winketh among those whom he would have to keep silence, with his eyes, or if nearer he, for like ends, speaketh with his feet, and when out of the reach of both, he teacheth even with his signing
 14 fingers. Treacherous frowardness after all is in his heart, he deviseth mischief from thence continually, he soweth seeds of great and last-
 15 ing discord among peaceable neighbours. There-

REFLECTIONS.

the things which belong to our everlasting peace and happiness; and let them not be hid from our eyes.

- 12 *Malicious arts.* A libertine life leads to erroneous sentiments, for its own defence, chap. iv. 24. Flattering accommodation to every kind of company, is a hideous distemper. Young people should tremble to oppose truth even in small matters.
- 13 A base heart uses every member as instruments of unrighteousness. The devices of fraud in particular are not to be counted. That character is very suspicious, which declines the use of plain direct speech. A man of uprightness seeks no good which would hurt that of another, Isa. lviii. 9, 11.
- 14 Out of the abundance of the heart, we both speak and act. Religion is a prime mover for peace.
- 15 The repetition of what proceeds from secret deceits, brings through time to sure contempt and ruin, Psal. vii. 14, &c. Punishments become the more dreadful when they are least expected. Some naturally slothful people are expert in mischievous contrivances, Mic. ii. 1. Hof. vii. 6. Irremediable is their misery, Job xxi. 30. Psal. lxxiii. 18, 19. Space and means for repentance may be taken away.

fore having made himself many enemies, shall his calamity, at length, come suddenly upon him; suddenly indeed shall he be broken to pieces without remedy.

FROM VERSE XVI to XX.

IN the eye of heaven, all vices are odious; but 16
these six things doth the Lord hate above
every other, yea, when we add seven to them,
they are no less than an abomination unto him.
A proud contemptuous look, a base lying 17
tongue, and hands that are easily brought to
shed innocent blood. An heart from evil habit 18
that deviseth ruinous wicked imaginations;
feet that be swift by frequent use, in running
to all kinds of mischief; A false witness that 19
speaketh defamatory fraudulent lies; and him

REFLECTIONS.

Vices most abominable. Sins delighted in argue an entire 16
aversion to good.

The swollen vaunting spirit may be seen in haughty 17
eyes; and is rarely separated from contention. Such
live in a continued lie, to accomplish unjust ends. Ca-
lumnny and flattering when found out become abo-
minable to men, as they ever are to God. Murderers and
liars go hand in hand, Jo. viii. 44. Isa. lviii. 7. Psal. v.
6. Matth. v. 21, &c.

One who thinks with pleasure upon what is evil, is a 18
daring transgressor, Jam. i. 13, 14. They who run to
injure others, are frequently their own greatest mischief.

There is a peculiarly quick and fatal progress in 19
lying, Psal. xxvii. 12. Zech. v. 3, &c. Jer. v. 3. To
pride and envy, the happiness of others is quite intolerable.
To separate chief friends is a partial murder; and some-
times worse. Schemes of unnatural division must be
deep laid to render them successful. As sure as God is,

that *with his knowledge* soweth seeds of discord among united brethren.

FROM VERSE XX. to the END.

- 20 MY dear son, let me again entreat thee to keep thy affectionate father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy *no less tender*
 21 mother. Bind them rather we beseech, and even ordain, continually upon the inmost tablets of thine heart, and tie them like a graceful or-
 22 nament about thy neck. When thou goest on through the journey of life * it shall lead thee safe; when thou sleepest, it shall likewise keep

* It, after them, is inaccurate, and should be read they. H.

REFLECTION3.

the above sinners, without deep and solemn repentance, must perish.

Restore, O Lord, thy fallen creation; and help us to recover our primitive and original glory, by the renovation of our natures, and by the reformation of our lives, according to the pattern of holiness in thy Son.

- 20 *Dehortation from uncleanness.* The applicatory part of intended useful discourse, should be made very close and yet conciliating, See Ch. i. 8.
- 21 Next to *Almighty God* our greatest obligations are to parents. Even indifferent fathers and mothers wish to have children better than themselves, Eph. vi. 1. Contemplation of good rules affects the heart, chap. iii. 3. Deut. vi. 8.—xi. 18. There is nothing so excellent and even glorious as religious virtue, Prov. iii. 23, 24. 1 Pet. iii. 1, &c.
- 22 To lie down with a good conscience is wholesome, preservative. So is the sleep of honest labour and temperance. In waking hours of the night, devout and moral meditations are delightful, Psal. iv. 4.—xix. 9.

thee; and when thou awakest it shall talk
 with thee, *for pleasures and benefits unspeakable.*
 For the commandment *understood and ponder-* 23
ed, is a lamp to ascertain the road; and the
law is as light itself; and the reproofs of sea-
sonable instruction are the way of accomplishing
a sure happy life. To keep thee well defended 24
from the pestive snares of the evil immodest wo-
man, from the seductive flattery of the tongue
of a strange harlot woman, who casts off shame.
Oh, lust not after her meretricious beauty in 25
thine heart for a moment: neither so gaze upon
her looks, as to let her take thee captive with
what darts from under her eye-lids. For by 26
means of such a whorish woman, a rash un-
thinking man is brought from affluence frequent-
ly to a piece of coarse bread; yea, and the
adulterers, who has once begun to violate her faith,
will eagerly hunt for ruin to the pure precious
life. Child, in comparison as thou art, let me ask 27

REFLECTIONS.

In doubtful cases, the *word of God* is both most need- 23
 ed and useful, Psal. xxx. 4.—xxxiii. 1, &c.—xix. 7.

An unchaste woman is capable of almost every thing 24
 bad. They come to act as *seducers*.

Imagination is the source of desire. 25

The most natural and usual consequence of a sensual 26
 life, is want. Riots must be fallen upon to drown con-
 science. Villainous exposing arts to procure means.
 Estate and soul are thus thrown away together. Pre-
 sume not either upon secrecy or resolution to break off.

It is against nature and experience, Job xxxi. 11. 27
 Without restoring when in our power, there can be no Ec.
 sincere amendment. Injustice, cruelty and contempt
 of God, do all meet in the *notour adulterer*, Lev. xx. 10.
 Mat. iii. 5. Hence a rotting memory and endless ruin.

- thy hitherto ingenuous soul*, can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes *at least* not be
 28 burnt? Can one go *unshod* upon hot coals,
 29 and his feet not *in like manner* be burnt? So he who goeth in *with a lewd design*, into the *house* of his neighbour's wife: whosoever there *familiarly* toucheth her *unseen by the world*, shall not long * be free of trouble as innocent.
 30 One improper dalliance is followed by a worse; and then think of the danger. Men do not despise with rage a poor thief, if he only steal to satisfy the instant pressing want of his soul,
 31 when he is hungry. But if he be found in any such act, and cannot evince the lawful motive for what is so suspicious; he shall restore by clear statute, to the extent of no less than † sevenfold, he shall give in that manner frequently all
 32 the valuable substance of his house. But whoso committeth adultery with a married

* Compare Jer. xxx. 11, &c. H. † A perfect Jew with number, and to be restricted.

REFLECTIONS.

Indignation, from irreparable injury, seldom misses an opportunity of revenge. Unbridled appetites are without taste, friendship, noble or tender sentiments. Their sole view is animal pleasure, which engender the most fatal calamities, ver. xiv. chap. xxix. 3. R. The righteous live in perpetual sun-shine as to knowledge. Exchange not many words with suspicious people.

Grant, O God, that rightly understanding the design and constitution of our nature, we may be convinced that our souls have the supremacy over our bodies, and that conscience and reason, which are assisted and enabled by the divine spirit, can and ought to overrule, conduct and employ the inferior powers in the exercise of virtue in the

woman, lacketh understanding || *quite* : he
 that doeth it destroyeth *in course of time*, the
happiness of his own soul. A *most certain* 33
 wound of *character* and *extreme* dishonour shall
 he get, and his reproach *ever after* shall not
 be wiped away. For *marital* jealousy is the 34
fiercest rage of a man ; therefore he will not
 spare in the day of *possible* vengeance. He 35
 will not regard *so as to accept* any offer of ran-
 som *from just penalties of law*, neither will he
 rest content, *but spurn*, though thou givest
 him many gifts for obtaining his forgiveness.



C H A P. VII.

FROM VERSE I. to VI.

M*Y dear unexperienced son, keep fast the* 1
knowledge of my words, and lay up
my commandments which proceed from pure
love and observation with thee, to regulate future
behaviour. Keep my commandments, *I again* 2
urge, and live in true delight ; and my parental

|| *Lacketh a heart.*

REFLECTIONS.

sight of our Creator, and in the pursuit of that happiness we were created for !

Earnest parental counsel. Affection and experience 1
 should meet with double regard. Impurity is the special
 bane of youth, Prov. ii. 1.—iv. 4

Rules of life are our best treasure and ornament, to 2
 be brought forth for occasional use. The life of reason
 is calm and lasting. Mind, the eye of the soul, is no less
 delicate than that of the body, Matth vi. 22, &c. An
 error may have great and lasting effects.

- 3 law, as the *tender* apple of thine eye. Bind
 them *so to speak* upon thy fingers *which are*
often seen, write them *too by frequent meditating*,
 4 upon the *inmost* table of thine heart. Say
 unto *the wisdom of age*, thou art my *beloved*
 sister; and call *prudent* understanding *also*,
 5 thy *intimate* kinswoman †. That they may,
through heavenly grace, keep thee from being
 hurt by the *strange lewd* woman; from the
 stranger to *modest necessary* virtue, which flattereth
 with her *smooth and studied* artful
 words.

FROM VERSE VI. to XXIV.

- 6 FOR, *however improbable it may be thought*
 at the window of my house, I looked
 7 through my † casement; And beheld *with*
deep concern, a number of *simple sauntering* ones
 I discerned in *particular* among the *idle dissipated*
 youths, a young man void of under-
 8 standing, by his *former vices* ||, Passing with

* See Deut. vi. 8.—xi. 18. † See Prov. v. 3. ‡
 Lattice. H. † See chap. i. 4.—ix. 23.

REFLECTIONS.

- 3 We have that upon our *finger-ends*, which makes
 dextrous in business, 1 Cor. xiv. ult.
 4 Agreeable and useful familiars are a high privilege
 Ruth iii. 2. Prov. ii. 12.
 5 Through natural and judicial progress vice hardens.
 Earnest teaching is full of argument, and even of repetition
 at times. Sensual frauds are peculiarly hazardous.
 6 *Female immodesty guarded against.* Cases, feigned to the
 life, may instruct no less than real. Corrupters of youth
 should be carefully guarded against, Ch. xx. 8. The

carelessness through the street, near her *suspicious* corner, and he went the way *close* to the opened door of her house; In the twilight 9
after sunset he began his career, in the evening he thus continued, in the black and dark night
itself. And behold there met him soon a *buse* 10
woman, with the *avowed* attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart, as she was inimical to pure
virtue. (She is of truth known to be loud and 11
stubborn in that degrading character; her feet for any time abide not to honest work in her
house. Now is she without ogling her more 12
distant paramours, now in the narrow streets, to solicit their near approach, and if she finds
none, even after these vile methods, lieth in wait for seduction at every other corner.) So she 13
caught him, as though she had been an intimate, and even kissed him, and with an impudent
looking face said unto him, I have now peace- 14
offerings * with me. to appease, should there be need for it, the wrath of heaven in full; this
day have I already in part paid my religious
vows. Therefore came I forth in so good or- 15
der, no less than fortunate time. to meet thee thus far from my house, diligently to seek thy
face, with preference to many others, and I have
now, thank God, found thee at last. I have, be- 16
tween ourselves, decked my bed with new co-

* To which it was usual to invite friends. H.

REFLECTIONS.

sensual rarely attend where they might be convicted, if not reformed. To suffer one bad family, may be the ruin of thousands. Youth, from want of experience, is much

verings of *admirable* tapestry, with *beautiful*
 carved work, *about these to lie upon, and with*
 17 *fine wrought* linen of Egypt. I have *besides* per-
 fumed my bed with *composts* of myrrh, aloes
 18 and cinnamon. Come let us take our fill of
unmolested love, until the morning, let us so-
 lace ourselves with *such sweet caressing* loves.
 19 For you must know, *what we call* the good man
 of the family is not at home *to surprise us, nor*
will be indeed, because he is gone a long jour-
 20 *ney to provide necessaries.* He hath taken a
 large bag of money with him *for traffic, and*
 will come home at the *new-moon day, accord-*
 21 *ing to time* appointed by him. Thus with her
 much fair speech she caused him to yield;
 with the *false* flattering *blandishments* of her
 22 lips, she *as it were* forced him. He goeth
 after her straightway, *like one dead to every*
thing ingenuous, just as an ignorant ox goeth to
 the slaughter house, or *rusheth on to punishment*
 as a *mad intoxicated* * fool to the correction of
 23 the stocks. Till *with the return of day, and*

* Compare Isa. iii. 16, 18.—xxii. 15. H.

REFLECTIONS.

in danger. Idleness is a great inlet to debauchery. One
 act of intemperance, is sure to bring on a worse, Deut.
 xxi. 20. Hos. iv. 4, 16. Ex. xviii 26. 1 Sam. ii. 22.
 22 Where schools of wisdom are, folly is the more unjusti-
 fiable, 2 Tim. ii. 22. Hos. v. 2. How many shun the
 eyes of men, who are fearless to be seen of God! Ch. i. 28.
 Female immodesty is shocking, chap. v. 3. Some in
 effect do ascribe their guilt to God, 1 Sam. xxiii. 7.
 Zech. xi, 5. Seducers apply themselves to every bodily
 sense. Lust is insatiable.

conviction together, a dart strike through his liver, to the utter ruin of both soul and peace : as a bird of no understanding hasteth to the fowler's snare, and knoweth not that it is there placed for his life.

FROM VERSE XXIV. to the END.

HEARKEN unto me now therefore *with* 24
anxious care, O ye who are ingenuous children,
and attend evermore to the words of my mouth.
 Let not thine heart, *even for once,* decline to 25
her evil ways ; go not astray in her deadly
paths. For be assured she hath cast down 26
many under a dismal wounded state ; yea, many
strong men, as to natural constitution, have been
utterly slain by her. Her house is the directest 27
possible way to the sepulchre of hell, going down
moreover, to the chambers of eternal death.

REFLECTIONS.

Advice to youth. The more hazards people have to 24,
 run, the more cautious and adviseable they ought to *be.*
be, Prov. i. 5. Deut. xxxii. 2. Check the first motions
and inlets to evil, 1 Cor. vi. 18. Loss of reputation,
estate and health, follow the loss of freedom and com-
fort.

Sensual crimes are clearly certified of eternal de- 27,
 struction, 2 Pet. ii. 10, 12, &c. 1 Cor. vi. 9. Gal. vi. *&c.*
 6, 7.

Suffer us not, *O good God,* to imagine ourselves under
 any necessity of following the impressions of *sense,* and
 the violences of passion against our *reason ;* and of being
 hurried by them into the exorbitances of intemperance,
 injustice and profaneness, to the dishonour of thee, and
 our own utter ruin !

C H A P. VIII.

FROM VERSE I. to the END.

- 1 **NONE** can be ignorant, unless they are wilfully
so of what concerns them; for doth not
religious and moral wisdom cry in some sort?
yea, and doth not the best of all understanding at
times earnestly put forth her voice for attention?
- 2 She standeth *up to be heard* in the top of high
 places *in government*, by the way-side too, and
 in the places of the *most frequented* paths.
- 3 She crieth *audibly and often* at the court-gates,
 at the entry of the *large city*, at the *very*
 4 coming in at the doors. Unto you, *in effect*
are her words, O men of rank I call, and my
 5 voice also is to the *lowest* sons of men. O ye
imprudent simple, then understand *the several*
necessary branches of wisdom; and ye next to
 fools, be ye *likewise* of an understanding
 6 heart. Hear *with solicitude and obedience*, for I
 will speak of **excellent things**; and the open-

REFLECTIONS.

- 1 *The nature of wisdom and its advantages.* Inattention
 will obstruct benefit from the very best means. What
 most concerns the bulk of mankind is plain. Vehemence
 is needful at times, to awake the careless.
- 2 *Authority is proper to truth.* God will require an ac-
 count of all our opportunities and other advantages.
- 3 *The immutable eternal differences of good and evil,*
 are felt at first by every one. Courts of judicature
 should be guided by these, and concourse for traffic.
- 4, 5, 6 *All ranks are interested in the rule of life.* The
 perfection of *man* is to be assimilated to *Almighty God*.

ing of my lips *too* shall be of right things, and profitable. For my mouth shall speak *the* 7
clear dictates of truth; and *the wickedness op-*
posed to that, is an abomination to my lips.
 All the words of my mouth are in *support of* 8
divine righteousness, there is nothing *that*
may be deemed with justice deceitful, froward or
conducive to a perverse course of life in them.
 They are all plain *besides* to him that under-
 standeth *how to employ his reason*, and right in
their consequences, to them that find out such
 knowledge. Receive my *obvious necessary in-* 10
struction then, and not *with the multitude be*
more eager to obtain silver: and *value know-*
ledge for good practice rather than choice *fine*
gold. For *such wisdom is even better than* 11
precious rubies; and all things *in short* that
 may be desired of *highest cost*, are not once to
 be compared to it. I wisdom dwell *invaria-* 12
bly with useful prudence, and find out know-
 ledge of *the most witty* * *inventions*, for avoid-

* *The planning rather of good designs, Jer. xxx. 24. H.*

REFLECTIONS.

Religion promises nothing falsely; whereas, *vice* flat- 7
 ters and deceives.

The *divine will* is not arbitrary, and far less tyrannical. 8

The best things unused cannot be profitable. *Up-* 9
rightness clears the mind, Rom. ii. 14, 15. Jo. vii. 17.

Proportion diligence to the worth of things, Prov. iii. 15.

Immaterial beauties, are preferable to all that can be 10
seen.

Amidst snares and difficulties, prudence and foresight 11
 are requisite, Prov. xxviii. 14, 12

- 13 *ing snares of ruinous guilt.* The fear of the Lord *which is my chief principle*, is to hate every kind of evil; *above them all*, pride in the heart, and arrogancy of speech or acting, and the cruel evil way, and the deceitful froward mouth do
- 14 I hate. Counsel *itself* is mine to give, and sound *virtuous* wisdom; I am understanding from above, I have strength to carry thither.
- 15 By me kings of the greatest eminence do reign, and princes employed by them decree justice.
- 16 By me those princes rule with honour and usefulness, and nobles too under each, even all the
- 17 judges of the earth. I love them all with truth that love me, and those that seek me early, after a diligent manner, shall for certain
- 18 find me. Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and the peaceable works of
- 19 righteousness. My fruit of that sort is better than gold for use, yea, than fine unalloyed gold;

REFLECTIONS.

- 13 The best rules are both easiest acquired and kept in remembrance. There can be no regular goodness without piety, chap. i. 7.—ix. 10. Disdain of others and boasting, are inseparable from pride, Matth. vii. 5.
- 14 An honest open temper, qualifies both to give and receive counsel. Schemes of policy are often ill laid, and therefore precarious; whereas sound wisdom will stand the test.
- 15 The social compact is secured by good laws and execution,
- 16 Rom. xiii. 1, &c.
- 17 The weakest may be made to understand what is essential, Psal. xix. 7. Early piety is most profitable. Bad principles are worse than none.
- 18 Those who are eminent are honoured by imitation. God-
- 19 liness with contentment is great gain, and durable, Prov. iii. 14.—xx. 15.

and my revenue *of course* than choice *polished*
 silver. I lead in the *sure* way of righteous- 20
 ness, *to obtain them*; in the midst of the paths
 of *clear* judgement. That I may cause those 21
 that *sincerely* love me, to inherit substance
 which the most *slandrous* dares not challenge;
 and I will fill up their store with my *honest* trea-
 sures. The Lord *Jehovah* possessed me in the 22
 beginning of his *creative* way, before his
 works of old. I was set up in *himself* from 23
 everlasting, from the beginning of *time*, or
 ever the earth was *inhabited*. When there 24
 were no depths *to contain living creatures*, or
 winged fowl, I was brought forth, *to give each*
of them their existence; when there were no
 fountains abounding with water *for currents*
of any kind. Before the mountains *which yield* 25
 these were settled: before the *smaller hills also*

REFLECTIONS.

Men cannot be *unjust* who are led by *wisdom*, and do 20
 oftenest prosper. A settlement of the soul upon true 21
 and equal peace, is compatible with temporal suffering.
 The miser starves amidst his hoards. The prodigal soon
 reduces himself. *Goods of the mind* cannot be pilfered.

Wisdom was the spring of action in the deity, and is 22
 everlasting. By her rules, men do partake of the *divine*
nature and happiness, Prov. iii. 19, 20. Under *knowledge*,
 prompted by *love*, it pleased the *Almighty* to create. Plans
 of *goodness* projected by the *charitable* are joyous.

The *wisdom* of God has and still continues to act with 23
 freedom, Gen. i. 2, &c. How blissful! The most *common*
supplies of nature are the most *requisite*. *Particulars* beau-
 tify description, and are much to the taste of a *pious soul*.

Great objects both amaze and delight. *Mountains* 25
 are the *immoveable cleansers* and repositories of *springs*. &c.
 They make a sweet variety to well turned minds. An

- 26 was I brought forth. While as yet he had not made the earth, *to form them of*, nor the open extensive fields *, nor the highest visible
 27 part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, *so replete with useful beauties*, I was there: when he set *what may seem like* a compass for exactness upon the face
 28 of the depth, *to hem it close in*. When he established the clouds above from thence: when he strengthened the amazing fountains
 29 of the deep: When he gave to the *lofty sea-billows* his decree, that the waters at no time should pass his commandment: when he appointed the *hidden* foundations of the earth,
 30 *to supply these*. Then was I by him, even as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him in

* According to some, all that surroundeth it; the moon, sun, planets, heavens, compare Ezek. xl. 5. Gen. vi. 14. H.

REFLECTIONS.

atom of dust is not beneath divine notice. The heavens exhibit a scene of wonder, even to rapture. The more we are studious, the more they affect. God adapts every thing with infinite precision. The balancings of the clouds are his; till being collected thick, they become heavy for *showers* of vegetating wealth. How wisely is the vast ocean appropriated to be the cause of these, and mean of universal commerce! God's ways in it are seen with astonishment. The most familiar should be the most devout. Be serenely pious and nothing will alarm. Almighty God must be above his own natural laws. Till the earth was completely provided, there was no rational inhabitant, Isa. xl. 12, &c. Divine attributes are sometimes beautifully personified. An attentive observation of the works of God is a chief duty, and ought to be a chief delight. Wisdom is a leading divine attribute, Ch. vii. 4. Lam. iv. 5.

designs of manifold useful variety; Rejoicing 31
most particularly in the habitable parts of
his earth, and the chief of my delights were
with the devout attentive sons of men.
Now therefore hearken unto me, by way of 32
grateful return, O ye children of intelligence, for
blessed are they above all others that know and
keep my ways. Hear instruction kindly offer-
ed for so good a purpose, and be truly wise, and 33
refuse it not upon any account. Blessed is the 34
man that heareth me with attention and perse-
verance, watching daily at my gates, waiting
for admission at the posts of my doors. For 35
whoso through care and diligence, findeth me,
findeth the best enjoyment of life; and shall
obtain special favour of the Lord. But he 36
on the other hand, that sinneth against me,
from culpable ignorance, wrongeth the peace of
his own soul; and all they that by progressive
wickedness, come in the end to hate me, act as

REFLECTIONS.

Man was its principal production upon earth, Psal. 31
viii. 5, &c. Gen. i. 26, 31.

The precepts of heaven are fruits of purest tender love. 32
All creatures under man observe divine order; and by
their example instruct. The curious hearken with solicitude,
Mal. i. 6.

To hear obediently is true wisdom, 1 Sam. xv. 22. 33
Faithful rebukes are kind, Psal. cxli. 3, 4.

Seek occasions to be instructed, Psal. i. 2, &c. Hear 34
without prejudice, Psal. xxv. 9. The more one suc-
ceeds, the more desirous they should be.

The natural tendency of religious virtue, is to promote 35
both pleasure and profit, Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c. Our best 36
faculties improved.

though they were in shocking unnatural love with death.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM VERSE I. to XIII.

- 1 **T**HIS is the more inexcusable, that supreme
wisdom hath generously * builded her
splendid house; she hath hewn out her seven
2 pillars with equal just taste and strength. She
hath even, as one on her marriage day, killed her
full-fed beasts, she hath mingled her best wine;
she hath also every other way furnished out her
3 table. She hath sent forth her regularly at-
tending maidens, to warn the willing guests; she
crieth, by their means, upon the highest places
4 of the whole thronged city. And her affectionate

* Compare Eccl. xiv. 15, &c. Seven was a perfect number among the Jews.

REFLECTIONS.

- 1 *Wisdom provides and invites. Parables must not be strained to a moral sense in every part of them. A sincere mind easily obtains good knowledge and practice through promised divine aids. Architectural order is particularly pleasant. Freedom and ease are the results of wisdom.*
- 2 *Supports are essential to the soul, like meat for a human body. They diffuse social endearing cheerfulness also, Isa. lv. 1, &c.*
- 3 *Those who heartily love wisdom, are affectionately met by her. She speaks by conscience, providence, scriptures, and the ministry of the word.*
- 4 *All are welcome to embrace religion.*

*words are, whoſo is inclined, be they of the
 moſt ſimple poor, let him turn in hither for
 profitable entertainme t ; as for him that, owing
 to few years and means, wanteth underſtand-
 ing, ſhe ſaith to him, Come, and delay not 5
 any longer, to eat of my ſpiritual bread, and
 drink of the ſimilar ſpiritual wine which I
 have mingled, of purpoſe to reſreſh, as well as
 preſerve. Forſake hereafter the careleſs wicked 6
 fooliſh, and live upon my uſeful inſtructions ;
 and go in the way of underſtanding, without
 a ſingle known departure. He that reproveth 7
 a profligate ſcorner, I am aware, getteth to
 himſelf the ſhame of neglect, if not inſult ; and
 he that rebuketh a wicked man, getteth him-
 ſelf a blot at leaſt. Whence my prime advice would 8
 be, to every young ingenuous convert. reprove not
 a ſcorner of the above deſcription, leſt he hate thee
 ſo as to make thee waver ; but rebuke, when
 judgement and experience may have ſome proper
 claim, a wiſe man in the main, and he will not
 only reform, but love thee. Give after inſtruc- 9
 tion to a wiſe man of that ſort, and he will be
 yet wiſer ; teach a juſt man to the rules of pious*

REFLECTIONS.

- What is merely ſenſitive can never ſatisfy, Iſa. xxxv. 8. 5
 The firſt maxim of wiſdom, is to avoid evil manners 6
 and company. Our peace and comfort muſt increaſe
 with religious experience.
 There is always hope till ſcorniſg takes place, from re- 7
 peated groſs ſins, Matth. vii 6.
 Suſpicion of being ill treated will not vindicate mi- 8
 niſterial cowardice.
 They who feel reproof and love the reprover, give great 9
 hopes, Pſal. cxli. 4, 5. Others ſhould tremble.

- friendship, and he will be sure to increase in
 10 learning. The fear of the sovereign Lord indeed, under which both of them act, is the certain beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy * one improved, is the best of all
 11 understanding. For by me who strengtheneth this divine principle, thy days of virtuous peace shall be multiplied; and the like years of thy
 12 life shall be increased. If in the manner now proposed thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for profiting thyself; but if thou, as too many others, disregardest, and then scornest †, thou alone shalt bear the severe punishment of it.

FROM VERSE XIII. to the END.

- 13 *AND because youthful lusts do often tempt to*

* Or holy things. H. † One who laughs at religion, morality and good manners, Psal. lxxxviii. 15, 16.

REFLECTIONS.

- 10 *Fear God* but dread not, as the surest preservative from sin, Job xxviii. 28.

- 11 *The good* live not according to humour but order. *Impious men* are both unfocial and unnatural. A *scorner* is but affectedly brave, Prov. vi. 16. Ignorance of religion is the parent of all vice.

We glorify thy name, O righteous Creator, who hast exalted us men to such an eminent degree of being, as to make us, a little lower than the angels, the inhabitants of heaven, and constant attendants upon the throne of thy glory. Let us hearken unto the voice of thee our God, calling unto us by the admonition of our consciences, by the ministry of thy word, and by the blood of thy Son, to repent and cease from sin, that we may live!

- 13 *An immodest woman.* Direct application is the life of

impious ridicule, remember that a foolish im-
modest woman is incessantly clamorous for a pa-
tient bearing; she is simple however, as to what
is good, and knoweth nothing proper. Hence,* 14
for she shamelessly† sitteth at the door of her
house, on a conspicuous seat in the high public
places of the city. To call stranger passengers 15
aside, who else would go right on their ways.
And her whole harlot manner seems to say, who- 16
so of you is simple, as to city customs, let him
turn in hither; and as for him that wanteth
understanding upon these subjects, she saith
also to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and 17
bread, if scarce, eaten in secret is doubly plea-

* *She hath no sense of decency. H.* † *What a contrast*
to ver. 1, &c. Compare Deut. xvii. 18. Ex. xi. 5. H.

REFLECTIONS.

doctrine. Hardened female sinners seek out others for their ruin, compare Job xxix. 6. Hence early bashful years are much in danger. Safety for most part depends upon a brave immediate flight. Visible want of shame ought to alarm, see chap. vii. 11, &c. Idle faunterers are easiest caught.

Profanity and impudence are close conjoined. A 16
 shew of argument misleads the unthinking. The *sensual*
life leaves neither time nor heart, for what is great, Rom.
 vii. 5, &c. Discovery is to them terrible. How much
infant blood have such to answer for? How many more
destroyed souls? Eph. v. 5, 6. Absence and time insensi-
 bly weaken hurtful attachments. R.

In the use of such means, as thou *infinitely wise and*
good hath designed, and thy *divine authority* hath esta-
 blished, we open our souls to receive these impressions
 from thee *our God*, of conviction and satisfaction to our
 minds, which are so much divine sufficiency and power,
 enabling us through *grace* to reform our lives, and to re-

18 fant. *She thus veils her words, for more effectual seduction ; but he, poor infatuated youth, knoweth not that the dead to every thing of true permanent happiness are there : and that her frequenting guests are in near approach to the depths of hell.*

REFLECTIONS.

fine our spirits ; to recover the rectitude of our natures, and to invigorate that principle of rational life, by which we shall serve thee as dear children.

PROVERBS.

CHAP. X.

THE Proverbs of Solomon *. A wise act-
ing son maketh a glad father; but a
foolish son in his behaviour, is the very heavi-
ness of his mother.

Filial duty. They who are religiously educated ought to reward parental diligence, by proportionable increase of wisdom, and good works. Their honour and usefulness is unspeakable. No *personal loss* is equal to disappointment from a *bad child*. *Maternal grief* is enhanced by strength of former love, and affection for her *husband*.

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing in
the end; but *wealth by righteousness* deli-
vereth from *premature death*.

Riches when valuable. How many speak to their chil-
dren, as though *money* could answer all things? Eccl. xii.
13. Mic. vi. 14, 15. By means of *unlawful purchases*,
cometh loss of credit, peace and happiness, for both
worlds, Luke xvi. 19, &c. Psal. xlix. 16, &c. *Equitable
righteousness* imports a mixture of *mercy*. It is sufficient
to ground a *Proverb*, that it holds in common, Psal.
xxxv. 25. Matth. v. 7.

* *Parables, apposite similitudes.* Here those of Solomon,
strictly speaking, commence; and therefore are rarely to be dis-
tinguished by paragraphs. The *antithesis*, or two parts of a
Proverb, serve best to explain each other.

- 2 The Lord will not *usually* suffer the soul * of the *compassionating* righteous to, famish, from lack of necessities ; but much more frequently he casteth away † the ill acquired substance of the *perfidious* wicked.

Beneficence profitable. Temporal rewards under the law were engaged for by covenant ; besides being a native fruit of sober, religious virtue, Psal. xxxiv. 9, &c. How often do large estates come to nothing ? And how little *solid contentment* do they yield ? 1 Tim. vi. 8.

- 4 He *soon* becometh poor, that dealeth with a slack *prodigal* hand || ; but the hand of the upright diligent maketh *proportionably* rich.

Diligence and prodigality. The riotous consume their possessions fast. Sudden judgements, likewise, are seen to overtake them. An useful employment is a *safe inheritance*. It directs when to *open* the hand, and when to *shut* it. Sudden elevations are not easily kept up. The *active* soul must be employed one way or other. Sloth leads to dangerous evil methods of gain ; whereas, *wealth*, acquired by degrees, is generally sure and lasting.

- 5 He that *honestly* gathereth in summer ‡ *season*, is a wise doing son ; but he that sleepeth § even in busy harvest with others, is a son that, under just poverty, causeth shame *extensive* and durable.

Industry and sloth. There is a time for every thing, which ought to be laid hold of. Lost opportunities cannot be brought back. Waste not the experience of

* Or life. † Or will overthrow the wicked for their riches. || Some, the hand of fraud, Job xxvii. 4. Psal. xxxii. 2. 2 Kings ix. 3. H. ‡ Put for fit seasons in general. § Put for indolence.

want and pain, for instruction. Take advice from known tender love. Use honest gains with moderation and cheerfulness. Youth is the proper cultivating time for future life.

*Manifold and large blessings are to be seen 6 upon the head * of the beneficent just, but the marks of violence, with insult overwhelming, covereth the † mouth of the wicked.*

Justice and violence. Temporal good wages to virtue are frequent, and spiritual ones certain. Blessings poured from above ought to diffuse themselves. Rising upon the hurt of others is ever liable to discovery and punishment, Gen. xlix. 25, 26.

The memory of the *beneficent just, long 7 after death*, is blessed by multitudes; but the name of the wicked *from neglect* shall rot for ever.

Reputation. Regard a good fame, as one end of life, though not the chief, Rom. xiv. 18. Phil. iv. 8. To be thus approved of the wise is true praise, and cheerfully paid. Worthy examples ought to live as long as possible, in the breasts of obliged persons. Death unmarks human characters. Even innocent relations may suffer from rotting memories. Splendid monuments do but recall their baseness.

The wise in heart will receive *useful com- 8 mandments for both worlds*; but a mere prating fool, *with the little he has*, shall fall in time under complete ruin.

Government of the tongue. Our first point of wisdom is to know and feel the various lessons of religious virtue. Such will ever grow spiritually. Self-conceit would usurp

* Put for the whole man. † Or face. H.

the whole of *conversation*; and usually from innocent topics, to provoking ruinous ones, Matth. vii. 1, 2. Modest worth is slow to speak, swift to hear, Jam. i. 19.

- 9 He that walketh *in the course of his life* uprightly, walketh surely *to both honour and happiness*; but he that *of design* perverteth his ways of behaviour, shall soon be known to *miserable disgrace*.

Uprightness beneficial. Sincere words and practice ensure credit; whereas, the lying tongue is but for a moment. Who would not deal with an established honest man? Good characters shine by close inquisition. Troubles in the road of virtue, prove beneficial. God and conscience are against the *perverter*.

- 10 Even he that *proudly* winketh with the eye *to deceive*, causeth *to himself much sorrow in the end*; but a *perpetual* prating fool, *for conniving purposes*, shall fall, *through time under total ruin*.

Deceit and evil speaking. Mischievous arts are various; and the less easy they are to discern, their hazard is greater. Signs of *cunning* should put people upon their guard. Hypocrisy and rashness tend to great hurt.

- 11 The mouth of a *benevolent* righteous man is like a *salubrious* well of life, *for invigorating*; but *the love of violence* covereth * the mouth of the wicked *from useful discourse*, and shall stop his own for ever.

Conversation. Social natures need to be revived and sweetened, as by water-springs. The man of pious love studies to please, that he may edify. Oaths and *slanders*

* Some, *lurketh in the mouth. H.*

are his abhorrence. We express by ingenious artless signs what we strongly feel. *R.*

Hatred, *from any cause whatever*, stirreth up 12
vexatious strifes; but *pure genuine* love covereth to the utmost all sins of others, while it seeks to amend them.

Love and hatred. Good neighbourhood is a chief satisfaction. Malice can never want pretexts for speaking and doing evil. It sees and magnifies the smallest escapes; dwells on them, and produces much misery. A common foe of this sort ought to be run down, and frequently is so. *Generous love* is captivating, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, &c. Even her *rebukes* are sweet, Psal. cxli. 4, 5.

In the lips of him that hath *good* understanding, *solid* wisdom is found: but a rod is sought for *as it were*, to scourge the back of him that is void of understanding, *for right* conduct. 13

Practical knowledge. Speeches, gracious and beneficial, flow from a piously enlightened mind. Some discourse only that they may appear learned, and call for contempt. One discreet practical principle is of more use than his whole store. Wise sentences contain often much in few words, and give the high pleasure of discovering what was unexpressed. *R.*

Wise men lay up knowledge, *for use and* 14
safety; but the mouth of the foolish *wicked* doer, with all his boast, is ever near to destruction.

Useful wisdom. Pious and moral principles should be kept in mind, often and carefully pondered. Few have ingenuity to retract unadvised words. With advanced age, understanding should ripen. *R.* *Wise men* are

cautious not to say too much at once; whereas the *loquacious* involve themselves, Hof. xiii. 12. Psal. xxvii. 5. *H.*

- 15 *As the world stands, the rich man's wealth is too often his strong fortified city; and the destruction of the weak poor is not unfeldom their pitiable poverty.*

Riches powerful. Wealth alone is able to make many friends, Psal. xii. 8. Poverty and neglect frequently go together, Eccl. ix. 13.

Frustrate, O Lord, the endeavours, and break the power of those who usurp upon the reason, and consciences of men; and who by unjust violence oppress and enslave them in body and soul.

- 16 The labour of the righteous, *in all ranks, tendeth generally to an * happy life; but the fruit of the wicked fraudulent purchaser to woful penalties from his sin.*

Industry. Riches and happiness are not essentially connected. A good man limits his desires to what is needful; and seldom fails of success. In the midst of plenty, some may be in straits, Jam. iv. 3. There is no end of avaricious amassing.

- 17 He is *therefore, in the surest way of life, that keepeth close to wise instruction; but he that scornfully refuseth even necessary reproof from thence, both erreth himself, and causeth other people to err.*

Happiness. The best and most useful people lay themselves in the way of being instructed. Serious regard is due to the judgement of proven affectionate friends. Dangerous wandering flows from wilful heedlessness, Prov. xxviii. 14.

* *Sustenance, Prov. xxviii. 27.*

Father of lights, let those who are ministers of religion effectually recommend it to the hearts of men, by the wisdom of their discourses, and by the holiness of their lives, so promoting present duty and the eternal salvation of men.

He that hideth hatred *in any case*, with lying lips *of fair promise*; and he that uttereth a slander *out of like base principle*, is a most odious fool. 18

Hatred, lying, slander. Diffimulation and evil-speaking meet often in the same character. They appear familiar, to pick out grounds for accusation. If it be decent to seem pleased; how much more to be really so? 1 Pet. iii. 8, &c. Brotherly reproof should be sincere, Lev. xix. 17. 2 Sam. xiii. 5.

In the multitude of words, *without suitable preparative thoughts*, there wanteth not often cruel sin; but he that refraineth his lips *from too much haste*, is wise *to a great degree* for himself. 19

Speech to be governed. To cover *malice* and to expose *failings* are common crimes of those who speak much. It is encroachment upon the rights of others to discourse. Transgressions of the tongue, are easy, various, and expressive of character, Eph. iv. 29.

The tongue of the *benevolent* just is *for usefulness*, as choice *refined* silver; but the heart of the wicked *ever dictates what* is * little worth. 20

Speech when useful. It is sweetly captivating, and a chief distinction or glory of man. The more good

* Or, *is like drops.* H.

words are communicated, the more is the bestower himself enriched thereby. Food of *spiritual life* is most to be desired.

- 21 The *well guided lips of the-compassionating* righteous feed many *hungering souls after sound beneficial knowledge*; but fools of *mad dissipation around them*, die under greatly aggravated guilt, for want of *such wisdom*.

Pity instructs. They who are judicious, soon give up with plausible words only. To assist others is the highest delight of a kind heart, Prov. xxvii. 9. Obstinacy in vice is lost even amidst the best opportunities. Fit means for establishing habits of virtue, are converse with God, in whom is the perfection of goodness; and converse with men, in whom is the image of God.

- 22 The *clear promised blessing of the Lord to upright endeavours*, it maketh *eminently rich for both worlds*, and he addeth no *cause of sorrow* with it.

Favour of God. Without God, success even from the best means is not to be depended upon. They both enjoy and suffer with the greatest advantage, who take the *Almighty* with them. Every kind of fraud, or violence, excludes the *divine blessing*.

As we have that in our constitution and make, O Lord, which is proper and peculiar to man; so may we seek our final enjoyment from those things which are the most proper and worthy objects of our faculties! Enable us to maintain our distinction, and to glorify our God; so shall we have the earnest of our future happiness, in our preparation for it; and at last attain the complete and highest degree of it, in thy presence, and communion for ever!

- 23 It is a sport to a *wicked fool*, to do mischief; but a man of *real understanding* hath,

as his pleasure, the wisdom of prudent application.

Sport how regulated. Impiety and obscenity are the grand forts of *criminal wit*. There is nothing so well adapted to reason as true belief, and morals, Jude 14. The least known sin should affect us with godly sorrow. Let never the *wicked* exceed the *good* in zeal.

The *just* fear of the wicked, in *sober cool* 24
hours, shall come upon him *for certain*; but
the desire of the righteous, *from clear divine*
promises, shall *no less certainly* be granted.

Hope and fear. The worst of people cannot help reflecting at times. Even suspicions of future misery are scarcely to be borne. Anguish after merriment becomes intolerable. Every desire founded in reason, shall be granted.

Fit us, *O thou One Lawgiver, Saviour and Judge*, to be ever with thee, and in the most humble prostrations and rapturous joys, to adore and celebrate thee, through his grace who redeemed us by his blood, and saved our souls from death !

As the whirlwind *swiftly* passeth, so is the 25
wicked no more *to be either seen or thought of*;
but the righteous, *by his extensive good works*,
is an everlasting foundation of *peace and*
honour.

The righteous stand firm. Noisy and terrible oppressors do not long exist, Psal. xxxvii. 20, 23. Virtue is a natural and grand security, Psal. lxxiii. 25, &c. God loves all in proportion to their resemblance of his own most perfect truth, beauty and usefulness.

Let not, *O Lord*, any surprises of temptations dispirit our hopes; but grant that by perseverance in well-doing, we may become more than conquerors, through him who loved us, and died for us, and redeemed us from all iniquity by his blood !

- 26 As vinegar to the teeth for immediate hurt, and as smoke in like manner to the eyes, so is the loitering sluggard to them that send him, upon any great design.

Sloth. In matters of trust, neglect of duty is cruel. Even slow execution may bring on ruin and grief, Matth. xxv. 26, &c. Heb. xii. 12, 13.

- 27 The obedient fear of the Lord longeth days of sweet enjoyment; but the years of the wicked, and yet more their peace, shall be obviously shortened.

Religion profitable. The most equal prop of virtue is reverence for the *Supreme Being*. Hence cometh honour, with healthful ease. Most vices produce troubles which issue in death, Psal. xxxiv. 12, &c. Sobriety and exercise prevent almost every disease. *R.* The wicked fear, because they hate God. How good is he, to promise rewards! Matth. x. 28.

- 28 The pleasant hope of the righteous shall be still more gladness in the end; but the expectation of the wicked, as both improper and ill founded, shall perish forever.

Hope. The good raise not their hopes too high for this world; and rarely fail of completion. How soon must the wicked die away from their keenest earthly pursuits and enjoyments? To win a momentary trifle, they forfeit an eternal crown.

May those above every other, *Almighty Father*, who profess the gospel, have their conversation in heaven, from whence they expect their *Lord and Saviour*. As risen with him, by their avowed belief of his religion, so may they set their affections on the things above, and not on things of the earth; that their lives being safe in the hands of *Christ*, when he who is to give eternal life

unto holy men shall appear, they may be approved, and rewarded by him. Even so, come *Lord Jesus*, come quickly!

The *clear commanded* way of the Lord is 29
strength to the upright; but *certain everlast-*
ing destruction shall be to the *obstinate* workers
of iniquity.

Righteousness strengthens. The principles of true piety, with the promises made to it, are most rejoicing, Psal. xvi. 1, &c. Against the wicked is the course of nature. They are also liable to judicial strokes. Their punishment will be greatest, who oppose the clearest light.

The righteous shall *seldom, or never*, be re- 30
moved in *early life*; but the wicked shall not
often inhabit the earth.

Death. Pious regular morals conduce both to personal and domestic establishment. The praise of parental integrity affects their dutiful children, and leads them to imitate. Those who cleave fastest to the world do least joyfully inhabit it. Premature deaths are full of horror often.

The mouth of the *beneficent* just bringeth 31
forth *treasures* of wisdom; but the froward
deceitful tongue shall *quickly* be *silenced*, as if
quite cut out.

Conversation. The righteous incline, and endeavour as much as possible, the benefit of others. Their example speaks every where. How base and impious is wicked discourse! Jam. i. 26.—iii. 1, &c. Matth. xii. 36, 37. It is the habit of speech that we must look to, Eph. iv. 29.

The *courteous* lips of the righteous know 32
what is *likely to be both most useful and accepta-*

ble; but the mouth of the wicked speaketh
all manner of treacherous frowardness.

Conversation. They who ponder their words, rarely fail of profitable, sweet and gracious utterance.



CHAP. XI.

- I** **A** False *deceiving* * balance in trade, is abomination to the Lord; but a *perfect* just weight is his *great* delight.

Justice. How ignorant or perverse must they be, who separate what is true, just, and kind, from their ideas of religion! The arts of overreaching, are meant to excess. Without *restoring*, the unjust cannot *repent*, while they have this in their power. To *pilfer*, under appearance of fair trade, is treacherously cruel, Luke xix. 35, &c.

- 2 When *the effect* of pride cometh, then cometh *debasing* shame; but with the lowly *in heart* is *sure manifested* wisdom.

Pride and humility. Conceit is disturbative and ruinous. None are so weak, but have revenge, at times, in their power. Prudence and modesty compassionate human errors, and obtain from thence wise praise, chap. xv. 33.—xvi. 18.

- 3 The *inflexible* integrity of the upright shall guide them to *what is safe and useful*; but the *deliberate* perverseness of transgressors shall sooner or later destroy them.

* Put for every other species of injustice, *Exod. xx. 15. Lev. xix. 35, &c. Deut. xxv. 13.*

Uprightness. Honesty of intention is easily known, and no less generally approved, Rom. xiv. 18. The wicked act as though they did hate themselves. Our surest shortest road to success in common, is by fair dealing. Thorough acquaintance gives establishment to such, Psal. xxvi. 11. Our rule ought to be *God's sword*, and not the *world*.

Riches *however carefully obtained*, profit not 4
their owner, in the day of wrath for other
 crimes; but righteousness in the acquirement
 and use of them, delivereth from what is most
 dreadful in death.

Riches when profitable. Every grain of extorted wealth will have its measure of torment, Jam. v. 1, &c. A sense of well-doing, and of generous deeds, give great support in dying, Matth. xxv. 30, &c. Eccl. xxix. 8, &c.

The righteousness of the perfect in his aims 5
 shall direct his way to what is honourable, and
 beneficial; but the intentionally wicked shall
 fall into disgrace and ruin, by the weight of his
 own wickedness.

Aims good and bad. The plain road of wise charitable justice is ever the least embarrassing, ver. 3. Fraudulent arts seldom are, or can be long hid. Simple hints are not sufficient for the illiterate, and young. Sincerity is the soul of virtue, and ever doth facilitate it.

Transform us now, O Lord, into thy likeness, by the practice of all goodness, righteousness and truth; and receive us unto thyself, whom we shall then resemble, when we shall go from hence, and be no more seen!

The righteousness of the charitable upright 6
 shall deliver them from being suspected: but
 the knavish transgressors of divine and human

laws shall be taken, one time or other, in the traps of their own naughtiness.

Uprightness and fraud. It does little hurt, to be ill thought, and spoken of, only by the *malicious*. Time and search will render those more glorious. Smooth knaves and hypocrites cannot abide such trials. All their protection is darkness, which will soon be over.

- 7 When a wicked man dieth, his expectation *from the world* shall perish; and the hope of ease to such coveting unjust men, beyond that, perisheth.

Covetousness. The more vice prospers, the more bitter thereby is death made. How poor a compensation then would even a *world* be? And what shall we say, to future anguish and despair? Psa. xlix. 6, and 14, &c.

Let us not rest, O Lord, in any good, short of that which is the best and greatest; but place our whole satisfaction in thee, whose loving-kindness is better than life, and without whom, the whole creation would be as nothing, and less than nothing, and vanity!

- 8 The *steadfast* righteous, when tried, is delivered out of trouble; and the wicked cometh in his stead, to suffer with continuance.

Troubles to good and bad. By wise and kind appointment, the best are taken under discipline; but all in measure. Malevolence soon recoils upon its own head, Prov. xxi. 18. Psa. vii. 14, &c. The more that good people are opposed, the more God doth care for them.

- 9 An hypocrite, who profanely hides his evil heart, under a fair shew, with his base lying mouth,* destroyeth for a time the character of

* Some corrupteth, Ex. xxii. 7. Jer. xxxi. 11. Mic. iv. 11. H.

his *innocent, useful* neighbour; but through a *purser channel of knowledge afterwards*, shall the † *just man* be *completely delivered*.

Justice and hypocrisy. Dissembled friendship, for the sake of evil deligns, is terrible, 1 Sam. xxii. 22. Esth. iii. 8. *Fight* openly, rather than *betray*. Beware of *flatterers*. The best things perverted, become the worst. Be intimate with the *faithful*, and the more that they *rebuke*.

When it goeth well with the righteous, in 10
their *credit and usefulness*, the city rejoiceth;
and when the wicked perish from among them,
there is *no less universal shouting at heart*.

Patriotic eminence. Sincere pious virtue is friendly to reputation; and, next to divine acceptance, is desirable, Rom. xiv. 18. The prostitution of high office, is pestive. When such perish, the public are served.

By the blessing and aids of the benevolent 11
upright the city *throughout* is exalted; but it
is overthrown by the *impious malevolent* mouth
of the wicked.

Patriotism. Instruction, counsel, prayer and faithful discharge of high office, are signal public advantages, Eccl. ix. 14. Wit added to pernicious patterns, does infinite hurt, Psal. ci. 6, &c. Jam. iii. 16, &c.

Let all the governors of the world, *O thou most High*, especially those who are Christian, be representatives of thee, *our God*, unto men, by the discharge of their office, as *ministers of God* to them, for good.

He that is void of *true useful* wisdom, de- 12
spiseth, by *reproach and calumnies*, his *far supe-*

† *Others, the just by his wisdom preserveth him.*

rior neighbour; but a man of prudent understanding holdeth his peace from every thing of that sort, to profit by him.

Censure. There is no obligation upon us, to talk contemptuously of the meanest, Matth. v. 21, &c. Matters ought not to be seen by halves. The sharpest pointed of all *reproach*, is that of *mocking*. Who would choose to drink of tears and blood?

- 13 *A base tale bearer walking from house to house revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful ingenuous spirit concealeth the matter as sacred.*

Faithfulness and tale-bearing. They who talk much, are fond of new things. It is in the nature of *friendship* to trust. Therefore, few evils against *love and justice*, are so aggravated as *betraying*, Eccl. xxii. 22. *Idleness and calumny* often go together, 1 Tim. v. 13. Ezek. xxii. 29.

- 14 *Where no wise counsel is, for general good the governed people must inevitably fall; but in the multitude of able judicious counsellors, there is sure public safety.*

Counsel. A cool reflecting spirit is able to exercise itself with advantage, upon every emergency. Self confidence takes no advice, Isa. xi. 3, 4. One such man, may ruin a whole society. Without *subordination* there can be no government, no safety, Eccl. x. 16.

Defend, O God, the truth and purity of religion, against all the corruptions of the enthusiast, and superstitious; and defend the rights and liberties of the state, against all usurpers and oppressors whatsoever.

- 15 *He that is surety, by express engagement, for a stranger, or one imperfectly known to him, shall*

*probably smart for it **, *when the fulfilling hour doth come*: and he that hateth, and fleeth from suretyship of this sort, is sure to escape.

Suretyship. Ignorance of people's situation, makes them, in effect, strangers. We must not be cruel and unjust to known friends. In a matter so delicate as suretyship, the utmost discretion is to be made use of. *Business* is liable to accidents, and *debtors* to become careless, Prov. vi. 1, &c. —xvii. 18. Loss and painful reflection together are hard to support.

A pure gracious woman retaineth her engaging honour; and wise † strong men retain the riches they have had from righteous acquisition. 16

Female grace, and riches. Every thing is best preserved by that which doth produce it. To establish character, avoid even slight indecencies, Eccl. x. 2. The earliest means of endearment, must not be departed from. The preservatives of female attraction, are a meek and quiet spirit, under pure religious sense, 1 Pet. iii. 1, &c. People of strength and abilities would blush to become an easy prey to their inferiors. Female virtues outlive beauty, 1 Pet. iii. 5.

The merciful and beneficent man doeth an immediate good to his own soul; but he that is cruel to the real poor, at the very instant troubleth his own † flesh. 17

Beneficence and cruelty. A generous practice takes its chief leading from mercy, Acts xx. 35. Such compassion can only be repressed by stupidity, or frequent cruel acts. It is a degree of mutual relief, to weep with them that

* Be sore broken in pieces, Psal. ii. 9. † Others, as men of rapine extort plunder, compare Job xxxvi. 7.—xv. 20. Psal. lxxviii. 14. H. ‡ Put for the whole man.

weep. Power to do good is the highest prerogative of the great. This is the most refined voluptuousness. Such are seldom left without a competency, or aiding friends, Matth. v. 7. Psal. xli. 1, &c. Isa. lviii. 11, 12. People have enough, who have something to distribute to the unfortunate. R.

Grant, O Lord, that every one who is named from *Christ*, may depart from that iniquity which is inconsistent with their profession; and that all such may be followers of thee, *our God*, as manifested to them in the life of thy son.

- 18 The wicked *in general* worketh with much labour a deceitful work even for himself; but to him that soweth liberal righteousness*, shall be a sure satisfying reward.

Liberality and injustice. A complete righteous character is to know and do what *Almighty love* hath seen fit to enjoin. They partake of one blessed nature. A wicked course of life, only promises what it cannot perform, Job v. 3. &c. xii, &c. Whatever is false has no foundation.

- 19 As benevolent righteousness tendeth to a life of admirable enjoyment; so he that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own spiritual and everlasting death.

Righteousness and vice. Cause and effect are close conjoined, Gal. vi. 6, 7. Wicked mirth is succeeded by double darkness, like a sudden blaze of thorns. R. Souls, in their present infant state should be prepared for a successive unfolding of intelligence, and happiness. R. True righteousness perseveres to the end.

- 20 They that are of a froward deceitful heart, are abomination itself to the all-perfect Lord;

† The Hebrew word is often used for mercy, Psal. cxx.

but such as are upright in their way of behaviour, are his constant delight.

The upright and froward. They who have bad ends, are opposers at heart of Almighty God. The sincere never incline to appear above what they really are. Though the world know them not, they shall be made conspicuous hereafter.

Let us all be in our lives, O God, what we are by our profession; that we may not misrepresent our religion, and dishonour our Saviour, by any contrary and immoral practices whatever. Mind us of the shortness and uncertainty of time; of the boundless duration and vast importance of eternity; that we may make those things our exercise and delight in this world, which we shall find in the greatest perfection, in that world which is to come.

Though hand join in hand, to make a powerful confederacy, the wicked shall not in the end, be left unpunished; but the seed of the righteous, as well as themselves, shall be completely delivered. 21

Effects of virtue and vice. Who can stand before God, when he is angry, and prosper? Crimes increasing with impunity, entail greater and more lasting wretchedness, Eccl. iv. 1, 2.

Create in us, O Lord, a veneration of those precepts of the moral law, which are entirely agreeable to the divine perfections! Abandon us not, most merciful Creator, at the grand extremity, from the fountain of all good; consign us not to the torments of a guilty and exasperated conscience; exclude us not from all that is to be hoped and desired; condemn us not eternally into that which is most to be shunned and dreaded!

As unseemly as a precious jewel of gold set in a wallowing swine's snout; so is a fair looking woman which is without discretion in speech and practice. 22

Female indiscretion. Beauty, like other providential favours, may be abused. That which indicates mental qualities, ought to captivate most, 2 Tim. ii. 9. Pet. iii. 3. *Corporeal beauties* fade, whereas those of the *mind* increase, Eccl. viii. 1.

- 23 The *prevailing* desire of the righteous is only *towards* good; but the *criminal aims and expectation* of the wicked *from these*, is found to *issue in sore* wrath.

Effects of virtue and vice. All wish their own advantage; but too often use improper means. Falsehood, violence and other vices, rarely succeed in their hopes. Fear of wrath, embitters their best external circumstances. They are haunted with secret invisible furies.

- 24 There is *to be met with one* that scattereth his *judicious alms*, and yet increaseth *the more*; and there is *to be met with also*, one that, *from sordid avarice*, withholdeth *from the needy* more than is meet, but it tendeth *through time* to *abject* poverty.

Liberality and penury. Maxims of generous virtue, are not comprehensible by the bulk of mankind. Faith in divine promises, clears up the mind. The *liberal* spare from *unnecessaries*. A *special providence* watches over their persons and families; and their end is everlasting wealth, Gal. vi. 9, 10. 2 Cor. ix. 7. Eccl. xi. 2, &c. Reason and nature are easily supplied.

- 25 The liberal *acting* soul shall be made *fat with comforts*; and he that *seasonably watereth others, in their drought of distress*, shall be watered also himself *for many generations*.

Liberality. One truly generous is inquisitive after need, to give relief. ver. 1. *H.* Almsgiving is an em-

ployment of good understanding and piety. It is watered with joyous reflections; and is often set by the Almighty far above want, Eccl. xi. 1, &c. Be like God, and in his stead, to numbers, Psal. cxii. 7, 8. Fear of future need ought not to bind up our hands. Benevolence enlarges with practice, Acts x. 1, &c. 2 Cor. ix. 8, &c.

He that in seasons of scarcity withholdeth 26
necessary corn for sake of a greater price, the
people from suffering, shall curse him, and not
without effect; but rich permanent blessings shall
be upon the head of him that favourably
selleth it.

Equity and extortion. They who detain what is another's cannot, in God's sight, give a mite of alms. Pull not back the morsel from an hungry mouth. The cry of the injured, doth enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath, Jam. v. 3, &c. Moderate profits, taken in seasons of scarcity, is great alms. The blessings of pious gratitude are seconded from above, Psal. cxii. 5, &c. Am. viii. 5, 6.

He that diligently seeketh another's good 27
procureth favour from God and man; but he
that seeketh mischief with like industry, it
shall assuredly come unto him.

Benevolence and cruelty. Cheerfully welcome every call of beneficence; and weary not, from their frequency. Bridle the narrow passions, which cause many just foes, Gal. vi. 10. None are so cruel, as they who are uncharitable, upon pretence of religion.

He that, regardless of what is due to others, 28
trusteth in the greatness of his riches for defence
shall certainly fall; but the equitable kind righ-

teous shall flourish as a branch, *promising numerous useful fruits.*

The use and abuse of riches. Power from wealth should appear with spirit in defence of the injured. *Proud vice* laid low, doth not soon rise again; but like the blasted leaf, doth wither and die. Confidence in *wealth* shuts up the bowels of *compassion*, Prov. x. 15.

Blessed be thy name, *O God*, who hast made us men to be happy, by the satisfaction arising from the exercise of goodness; without which we must be miserable as the devil is, by malignity, depravation and degeneracy of vice, which is a separation from and enmity against the *chief good!*

- 29 He that troubleth *the people of his own house*, shall inherit *overthrowing wretchedness*, as from the *stormy wind*: and the *very fool in time*, shall be degraded like a bond-servant, to the *more wise, meek and peaceable of heart.*

Domestic trouble. Idleness, with want of œconomy, lead to cruel, unnatural habits of temper; which ruin household ease, ver. 17. Winter storms pierce not so deep. The proudest tyrants have fallen into the most abject slavery.

- 30 The *natural fruit of the righteous mild liver*, is like a tree of life, for *beauty and profit**; and he that *thus winneth souls over to their own best interest* is wise, in like manner to keep them.

Mildness. Pious virtue is a sweet, lasting and useful fruit-bearer, Jam. iii. 13, &c. In life, this prevents much evil: and is generous after death, Dan. xii. 3. Prov. iii.

* Others, for it attracteth the admiration of the wise, Gen. ii. 9. H.

he that hateth reproof, and thus avoideth his best friends, is, and must abide brutish.

Instruction and reproof. Honest advice is kind, and the grateful receiver of it, is already made better to a good degree. He invites like good offices. Love of *practical knowledge* must rejoice under its gracious effects. To stand upon the defence of what is wrong argues an incurable state, Matth. vii. 6. Love itself must give them over.

- 2 A good *intending* man obtaineth favour of the Lord: but a man of wicked, *though unexecuted*, devices will he condemn.

Good and evil intentions. The generous at heart ever combat measures of vice. They are also prevailingly set upon what is right; till, if possible, they become masters of it. Occasions and means of usefulness, do peculiarly bless them. Such are the best images of God upon earth; and undoubted objects of his complacent regards. They enjoy the world, and yet are not enslaved by it. But how can the self-condemned wicked be easy? Luke xii. 47. *Knaves* in business are worse than robbers.

- 3 Let a man think and devise as he may, he shall not be established in *profitable credit* by his *successful* wickedness; but the deep fixed root of the righteous shall not be moved by blasts of any kind.

Effects of righteousness and vice. Methods of violence and fraud, seldom raise those who practise them above dependance. Their possessions are precarious, and themselves hated. Plain honesty rises to a noble vigorous stem, verdure and fruitfulness are its usual honours. The prosperity of the wicked is all in appearance, Psal. lxxiii. 18, &c.

A virtuous *frugal* woman is *like a crown* 4
for ornament to her affectionate husband: but
she that by wasteful immodest methods, maketh
ashamed, is a nigh disgraceful curse to him, even
as rottenness in his bones.

Wives, good and bad. Constancy and discreet manage-
 ment are shining female honours, and productive of
 much domestic blefs. Necessary subsistence squandered,
 leads to painful mutual altercation. Pure religious love
 sweetens cares, and heightens upright joys. Marriages
 from mere secular motives, have much to dread from
 public infamy, with domestic uneasiness. Previous
 caution and prayer, are due to the choice of a wife.

The *very* * thoughts of the righteous are 5
right, before an all-seeing God; but the coun-
sels of the wicked† though specious, are found
to be cruel deceit, in the end.

Thoughts good and bad. In the eye of heaven, men
 are just what they prevailingly think of, and design,
 Prov. iv. 23. A good man rejoiceth under new and
 clearer light. To hate vain thoughts demonstrates ex-
 cellence of character, Matth. v. 8.—12.

The words of the wicked are *often to seduce* 6
others to lie in wait for the shedding of innocent
blood: but the mouth of the upright, when
attended to, shall deliver them from such hideous
vice.

Words good and bad. A heart full of the world, stands
 at nothing. Goodness employs itself much for the safe-
 ty of others, Job xix. 11, &c. Language should be
 used with great caution.

* *Policy, schemes, designs, plans, Prov. xix. 21.—xx. 18. H.*

† *They tend, either by fraud, or violence, to injure.*

- 7 The wicked are often † *suddenly* overthrown and are not fit to rise again ; but the house, as well as the person of the righteous shall stand long secure.

Effects of righteousness and vice. Their situation must be dangerously tottering, whom God, and his best friends are united against. The cruel have been known, in many cases, to deliver themselves up to justice. Fair honest means are naturally exalting, and have additional divine supports, Prov. x. 25, 30.

Let all the sinners of the world, *O Lord*, comply with the wisdom of the just, and so become good ; and let all good men daily become better ; that every one may be in his proportion to one another, what God in perfection is to us all, good and beneficent ; and that all fraud and violence may cease, and be abhorred, as what is unreasonable and unnatural.

- 8 A man shall be commended, according to his *proven practical* wisdom ; but he that is of a false perverse heart, whilst he affects high beneficial knowledge, shall be despised for his manifest inconsistencies.

Practical knowledge. The objects of genuine wisdom are just ends, with fair means. The very worst for a time may be well spoken of ; but when found out, they are the more despised. From the *principle*, we are to judge. Do not suddenly condemn, Matth. vi. 1, &c.

- 9 He that is despised in a virtuous condition from malicious envy, and hath a servant for defending him *, is better, and more likely to be

† Some would translate, look round for the wicked, behold ! they are no more, H. 2 Kings v. 26. * Others understand it, servant to himself ; or obliged personally to officiate, Gen. xlv. 13. H.

*esteemed, than he that proudly * honoureth himself, and yet, from his evil practices, lacketh necessary bread itself.*

Self-estimation. Some do what they can, to debase the humble, from their want of outward appearance. Their competence, however, is infinitely preferable to vanity from externals, Prov. xi. 29. Those who are modest pass most comfortably through life.

A mild righteous man † regardeth with proper attention the life of his beast; but what ought to move the tender mercies of the wicked, are often accompanied with desperate cruel acts.

Mildness and cruelty. True justice comprehends in it a habitual good nature. Infinite wisdom hath subordinated brute beasts to man, for mutual advantage. Increase not their necessary troubles. Be not tyrants but protectors. Feed and labour them according to strength. From untenderness to brutes, cruelty to men is a common easy transition. From such a habit, few people become kind.

He that regularly tilleth his land, shall be fully satisfied with the needful sustenance of bread; but he that neglecting business, followeth vain idle dissolute persons, is soon seen, from his tormenting wants, to be void of useful understanding.

Industry and idleness. An inclination to eat, and not work, leads to become cruel. Spendthrifts cannot be long rich; and soon harden even to sights of misery. God and nature are on the side of diligence. The desires of such are duly moderated. Husbandry is the

* Or, maketh a shew. II. † See Psal. i. 6. Prov. xi. 17.

prime, and most necessary of all occupations secular; and therefore put for them, Gen iii. 19. Eph. iv. 28.

- 12 The wicked *person behaves as one who desireth to be caught in the pestive net of evil men, for speedy hurt*; but the root of the righteous, *like that of a tree in good cultivated soil, yieldeth plenty of excellent fruit.*

The righteous and wicked. Those who are faithful in office, do great good to mankind, as well as to them that are highest. The wicked weave out of their own devising bowels, what may ensnare and prove pernicious. The unsuspecting, too, are sometimes caught by their subtle arts. Extensively good people hold their valuable places surest, Prov. iii. 35.

- 13 The wicked man, *with all his craft, is usually snared at last, by the transgression of his false lips*; but the just, *though leased for a time, shall come * honourably out of his trouble.*

Speech well or ill used. Severe lying words compose the wicked's net. Self-contradictions, however, do miserably expose him. On the other hand, good reputation establishes with inquiry. Matters of fact require only a clear nervous brevity. *R.* Secret snares are more to be dreaded than open enmity.

- 14 A man † shall be *highly satisfied with good done by the fruit of his mouth, and the recompence of a man's no less generous hands, shall much more be rendered unto him.*

Beneficence of word and deed. Kind advice may be of long service. The delights of the charitable are pure and lasting. Tears, and words of sympathy themselves,

* *Never be entangled.* † *Or men, Psal. lxxiii. 5. H.*

are sweet. Returns of gratitude are frequent, but these of future recompence, both more certain and durable.

The way of a *wicked* fool is right in his own eyes, and leads to *sure afflictions*; but he that hearkeneth unto *friendly counsel* is *successfully* wise. 15

Self-conceit. They who suspect their own judgements least, are in greatest danger; and most impatient of advice, Matth. vii. 6. Those who dispute for victory ought to tremble. Prudential conduct is the praise of wisdom. Vice is the greatest of all folly, Rom. viii. 7. John. iii. 19.

A *passionate* fool's wrath is presently known from his *own sad sufferings*; but a *calm* prudent man * covereth like *sad* shame. 16

Hasty tempers. The rash kindle at once, and are disgraced by their own ridiculous words and deeds. Servants themselves see and despise this. To stifle the marks of indignation keeps up influence. Wrath is a short, disgracing madness, 1 Tim. ii. 8.

He † that *invariably* speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness, in *one of its most necessary branches*; but a false witness against others, doth great hurt by deceit. 17

Truth and falsehood. Truth is the bond of society. Judicial testimonies in particular, ought to be free, full and unambiguous. Partial truth, and doubtful phrases, tend to mislead judges, Prov. vi. 19. Psal. xv. 2.

There is that speaketh in *malicious* rage, 18

* Seemeth ignorant of an affront. † The truth will a just man declare, and speak out; but a false witness will equivocate, Isa. xli. 2. H.

what is like the mortal piercings of a sword; but what issues from the tongue of the benevolently wise †, is productive of pleasure like health.

Rage and sobriety. The name of a man is his life, Matth. v. 21, 22. Sweeten or cure if possible, the wounds of falsehood, Psal. cxxxiii. 1, &c.—lii. 2.

- 19 The lip of *beneficial* truth † shall be established in credit for ever: but a lying plausible tongue is but for a moment.

Truth and lying. Truth is uniform, inflexible and has nothing to fear. Selfish and party views, are dangerous to this. Name and property are never safe with such. Time is fatal to lying. Reputation blown is scarcely mendable.

- 20 Deceit is in the heart of them that deliberately imagine evil §, along with others; but to the ingenuous affectionate counsellors of peace, is sublime joy.

Ingenuity and deceit. Some natures take pleasure in dissension; and study for that purpose. Solicitude against discovery haunt such close. Generous delight is ever on the rise. Harmonists breathe in sweet air. They are sweet in themselves, and greatly please, Matth. v. 9.

Bring all mankind, O Lord, to the right understanding of thee, and of themselves, that they may not wander from the truth, through the ignorance, and error of their minds; but having the direction of true religion, they may live according to it; and in all their actions, shew forth the divine virtues of him, who hath called them out of darkness, to his marvellous light.

† Or *healeth*. H. ‡ Is ever steady, 1 Chron. xvi. 30. H.
§ Or, disappointed shall be their hopes, who privately foment quarrels; but joy shall they have, who persuade to peace. H.

There shall no evil happen to the *benevo-* 21
lent just, *which it is possible for his friends to*
ward off; but the *cruel lying* wicked shall be
filled with *the miserable fruits of their own mis-*
chief.

Benevolence and cruelty. Good-will to mankind is glo-
riously preservative. Overwhelming ruin is the native
effect of obstinate malicious guilt.

Lying lips, *above most other crimes,* are abo- 22
mination to the Lord: but they that deal
truly in their words and contracts, are his *pecu-*
liar delight.

True and false dealing. No devout pretences can make
up for want of truth, Psal. xxiv. 3, 4. Mic. vi. 9, 10.
Words and actions ought ever to accord with conviction.
It is inseparable from a virtuous character, to hate the
opposite vices.

A prudent man *concealeth knowledge,* 23
from modesty; but the *proud* heart of fools
forwardly proclaimeth *their foolishness,* to
general contempt.

Modesty and pride. Humility and good understanding,
oftenest meet. Useful converse should be divided.
What obscures the *modest* for a while will make them
triumph in the end, Eccl. x. 3. To reserve useful
speech to the most proper season is worthy of great
praise. The chief parts of conversation, should be
yielded to those of superior rank and knowledge. Hol-
low vessels sound loudest.

The hand of the diligent shall *exalt him to* 24
bear honourable rule; but the *self-deceiving*
lothful shall be *brought under vexatious* tribute
to superiors.

Diligence and sloth. Honest assiduity in youth, makes future days both creditable and useful. Offices of distinction are generally held by merit, Prov. x. 4. Jer. xlviii. 10. Indolence degrades to servitude, begets fraud, discord, effeminacy, and all the social evils. R.

- 25 Heaviness in the heart of a man, maketh it to stoop from the sight and observation of others; but a good consoling word maketh it glad, and willing to declare the same.

Joy and heaviness. Great compassion is due to an wounded spirit. A word at times may be of use, Job xli. 13. Hab. i. 16. Persuasive softeners for every soul disorder may be found in scripture.

- 26 The * righteous is more excellent of nature, than his impious unjust neighbour; but the way of the careless wicked seduceth them, by mere shadows of things desirable.

Righteous excellence. Even the wicked secretly venerate noble beneficent virtue. An inferior object pursued, sinks the soul to proportionable meanness. Their principles and works are built upon error. Truth received into the mind by knowledge, and conviction, becomes one with it; being to the man what understanding is to rational agents, a vital operative principle, to choice affections and conduct.

- 27 The † slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting, like another who foresaw the painful disgrace of want; but the well earn-

* Or, a just man gaineth pre-eminence over his neighbour; but the path of the wicked leadeth him astray. † Rather a plunderer, 2 Kings xix. 23. Jer. v. 27. Prov. x. 4. vi. 6. H.

ed substance of a diligent man is precious to enjoy.

Industry and idleness. Regular employment renders living creditable and beneficial. It stands in need of no hurtful measures for maintenance. An upright purchase can be looked upon, and doth not upbraid; nor doth soon fail, Dan. iii 7.

In the way of *useful* righteousness is *the* 28
true enjoyment of * life; and in the *sure* path-way
thereof, there is no death of *faculties*, nor
of *steadfast rational bliss*.

Happiness in virtue. Godliness is for most part successful; and qualified to yield consolations under trouble, Deut. xxxiii. 6. Desire of happiness is the moving spring of man's heart. The divine laws are not chains to fetter us, but wings to raise us up to heaven. R.

Grant, O God, that thoroughly acquainting ourselves with the rules and measures, the standard and exemplar of our duty; the temper of our minds may be fully reconciled unto the practice of obedience; that the joy of our souls may be in it, and our whole man harmonize therewith!

C H A P. XIII.

A Wise *respectful* son heareth with due
care his *affectionate* father's instruction;
but a *profligate* scorner heareth not
with *patience* even *seasonable* rebuke.

* Some but the bye-way leadeth unto death, Job xxviii. 7. H.

Filial duty. To speak and act under proper rules determines the happiness of life. They who undervalue wholesome counsel are next to hopeless, Matth. vii. 6. Inferiors, from years and experience, need to be often and tenderly advised, Psal. cxix. 9. A wicked man's reason serves only to contradict his desires, without being able to correct them. His pleasures are deceitful; his pains real; his hopes disorderly and treacherous. R. Prov. ix. 8, 12. 1 Kings i. 6.

- 2 A man shall eat *what is* good, by the gentle fruit of his mouth; but the *hungry* soul of the *perfidious* transgressors, *from rash speech*, shall eat *with grief the effects of his violence*.

Speech proper and improper. A soft answer maketh warm beneficent friends, Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c. Such as have neither good words to take or give, are in a state truly deplorable.

- 3 He that keepeth his mouth *from what is provoking*, keepeth *one of his best comforts in life*; but he that openeth wide his lips, *to speak without advisement*,* shall have *sure and hideous destruction*.

Tongue to be governed. Temptations to rash hurtful speech are frequent, Jam. iii. 2, &c. A chief rule of prudence is to speak little with others, and much with ourselves, Jam. i. 21.

- 4 The soul of the sluggard desireth *what he has not a suitable spirit to act for*, and hath next *to nothing necessary*; but the soul of the diligent *to contrive and execute*, shall be made fat *from abundance*.

* Or, let him dread evil.

Diligence and sloth. Few vices waste so much as idleness. Keen appetite often rises with it. To spend upon borrowing is certain ruin, Prov. xiv. 23. In some few cases, the laws of nature may be overruled, for trying the benevolence of others.

A righteous man hateth *the base resource of* 5
lying; but a *false* wicked man is soon rendered
odious, and cometh to public shame.

Truth and lying. Where people are averse to work, rather than starve they make use of vile deceitful arts, Prov. xxx. 1, &c. To magnify the value of what we sell and underate what we design to purchase, is base, hateful, oppressive. Money is *trash*, compared with honour.

Unvarying righteousness keepeth him that 6
is upright in the way of *preferment and ease*;
but wickedness overthroweth the *disingenuous*
sinner.

Uprightness. When once a person has acquired the habit of justice; he is secure in virtue, with all its precious effects. Vicious measures do thwart each other, to exposure and ruin, Prov. xii. 9.—xi. 24, 25.

There is that maketh * himself rich, for a 7
while by fraud and oppression, yet hath nothing
long; there is, on the other hand, that
maketh himself poor, for the good of others,
yet hath great internal riches, and not unfrequently
the blessing of outward opulence likewise.

Beneficence and avarice. Splendour is a frequent covering to wretchedness; whereas, godliness with con-

* Or, that pretend to be rich, whilst some pretend to be poor. H

tentment is great gain. Alms only seem to diminish stores.

- 8 The * ransom of a *wicked* man's life from punishment, are his *corrupting* riches; but the *innocent* poor heareth not rebuke *itself*.

Virtue and vice compared. Before the bar of equity, there is no respect of persons. Sudden and large estates provoke inquiries to suppress them. They are happiest who need rebuke least. . Keep desires within due bounds. Poverty secures against reproach and envy.

- 9 The *prosperous* light of the *well known* righteous rejoiceth in *clearness*; but the *high-blazing* lamp of the *fraudulent* wicked, shall soon be put out.

Successes of good and bad compared. Justice conciliates increasing regard, Prov. iv. 18. A sudden blaze often presages sudden extinction. The school of religion makes people agreeable and polite. R. Pride little thinks of its own defects, and dwells much upon those of others.

- 10 Only by *rash* arrogant pride, even after wise counsel, cometh contention; but with the well advised part of mankind is quiet orderly wisdom.

Advisableness and pride. A bad temper is fraught with disturbances, and is too vain to amend. The humble are ever open to counsel. Those who quarrel oft should suspect themselves, Matth. v. 5. Pride is hatefully unjust to God and man, Zeph. ii. 10, &c. Psal. x. 2.

- 11 Wealth gotten by *fraudulent* vanity shall be soon diminished; but he that gathereth

* Or screen, Gen. v. 14.

by honest though slower degrees, shall increase to great extent.

Riches, lawful and unlawful. Sudden falls from sudden wicked rises are frequent. Comfort and quietness are large increase. Choose an honest calling, and adapted to abilities, Eph. iv. 28.

Hope of future good, when long deferred from 12
*enjoying, maketh the heart more sick, than if there had been no reliance at all; but when the object of desire cometh to be possessed, it is, for growth and beauty, like a * tree of life.*

Hope. They manage well for ease, who wisely regulate their expectations from worldly things. *Nature* is satisfied with a little; whereas *fancy* is boundless. Be not impatient of matters uncertain, Gen. xlv. 26. Live for eternity.

We render our humble acknowledgements, and thanksgivings to thee, *O God*, for that thou hast made us capable of the greatest happiness; and that thou hast assured us of that happiness, upon our repentance, by the declaration of thy will, and the blood of thy son!

Who so despiseth the *divine* word shall be 13
for ever destroyed; but he that feareth to transgress the commandment shall be rewarded with peace unspeakable.

The word of God. The more that people are unpunished in this life, the greater will be their punishment hereafter. In what is commanded, we ought ever to regard the *supreme authority*. To know the relations and differences of things, is *truth*; and to act according to these, is *virtue*. *R.*

Blessed be thou, *O God*, who hast designed that by the practice of sobriety, righteousness and godliness, our rea-

* Or the tree of life in paradise.

K

sonable faculties should be exercised, and improved, a spiritual and heavenly state should be settled, and established; our natures and our actions regulated and sanctified.

- 14 The law of the wise *from scripture*, is a sure undecaying fountain of happy life; leading to depart from the deceitful snares of eternal death.

Life and death. God's rules are transcribed from his own all perfect excellence. To obey them is to become at once noble and blessed. Principles and motives of vice, require being varnished, in order to deceive. Religion is a science that dilates the heart, and fills it with god-like sentiments; a science which God only reveals to pure minds. R.

- 15 Good *practical* understanding * giveth favour in the eyes of all; but the way of wilful capricious transgressors is hard to endure.

Fame. Known wise principles lead to what is both safe and pleasing. We are sure where to find a person who acts upon them. Axioms repeated often, evince their importance, and ought deeply to affect.

May the knowledge, O God, we have of thee, and of ourselves, reconcile the reason of our minds to the necessity of our duty, and be the effectual recommendation of it: that we may live religiously, out of the fullest conviction and satisfaction, that everlasting righteousness is as necessary to us, as what is most natural and peculiar to man.

- 16 Every prudent man dealeth with *previous* knowledge, of what he is about to manage; but a fool from ignorance, layeth open his folly to contempt and ridicule.

* Or ingenuous manners, Prov. xi. 3, 6. Deut. xxi. 4.

Prudence and folly. It is an essential requisite in prudence, to foresee and avoid evils. Ignorance is froward. Though things need not be told either altogether, or all at once, yet strict truth should be observed, ch. xii. 23.

A wicked, * *slothful, or evil designing messenger* falleth into mischief: but a faithful *executing* ambassador, is *sure health both to himself and others.* 17

Messengers good and bad. Every degree of trust requires attention, and honest diligence. Misunderstanding and ruptures come of unfaithfulness, and provoke all concerned. Regular expected accomplishments by inferiors yield good healthful spirits. The mean of a nation's cure, will also be certain of its love.

Poverty and shame shall be to him that *refuseth kind, seasonable instruction*; but he that regardeth reproof, *rather than to live under error*, shall be honoured *at last.* 18

Instruction and reproof. Honest poverty is respectable. That from idleness and extravagance is odious. Attend to secret warnings. Take with just chastisement.

The *lawful earnest* desire accomplished is *sweet to the labouring soul*; but it is abomination to *sluggardly riotous* fools, to depart from *obstructing* evil. 19

Desire and diligence. All would be happy, but few choose the sober, righteous and godly way which leadeth to this. Habits of vice triumph over wise desires often.

Suffer us not, O Lord, to continue, and to increase

* Or a lying messenger bringeth in to disaster, compare 2 Sam. xx. 15. Dan. xi. 12. H.

our incapacity for thee, by the practice of such wickedness as is inconsistent with thy nature and favour; that knowing where our true and only felicity doth consist, we may reason ourselves out of love to those sensual gratifications, which are below the excellency of our being, and contrary to the proper exercise of our faculties, and use of ourselves.

- 20 He that walketh *familiarly* with wise, virtuous men, shall be wise *in time even as they are*; but a *familiar* * companion of wicked fools, shall be *broken to pieces and destroyed with them*.

Familiars. A chief expedient for becoming good, is to be intimate with those whose presence is a lesson; and their discourse much more. They who bear with evil at first will come to relish it. Friendship, the greatest of all felicities, is hard to be met with. Frailties either cool it or disturb its harmony. *R.*

- 21 Evil *afflictive circumstance* pursueth *abandoned* sinners; but to the *unfeigned* righteous, good *for both worlds* shall be repaid.

Virtue and vice. Unexpectedness doth greatly aggravate trouble; and is the native produce of manifold crimes. The good of righteousness is large and constant, Psal. xxxvii. 22, &c. Sinful pleasures are momentary, mixed.

- 22 A good *charitable* man *not only hath where-with to satisfy himself, but very often* leaveth an inheritance to his children's children; and the *ill acquired* wealth of the sinner is *no less frequently* laid up for the just successor.

Industrious economy. There is a blessing of heaven in

* Or, *he that feedeth fools shall be corrupted.* *H.*

diligently purchased treasures. Prodigal heirs do often squander ; whereas those brought up under pious tuition know both how to live, and let live, Job xxvii. 16, &c. Posterity is one of our chief objects, in whom we live again.

Much necessary food is in recompence of the 23
seasonable tillage of the poor : but * there is
that of like sort is destroyed for want of judge-
ment how and when to labour.

Industry with judgement. Diligence and frugality, are the two hands of fortune. Some are born to more than they are able to keep. Idleness argues want of understanding. The rich ought to be God's faithful stewards.

He that from indulgence spareth his correcting 24
rod hateth in effect his own son : but he that
wisely loveth him, chasteneth him with mea-
sure and betimes.

Parental correction. It is prudent to begin children early to know and obey. Check the first appearances of evil, and encourage what is good. When understanding is weak, and sensitive desires strong, there is most need of chastening. Ground must be cleaned in order to become fruitful, Prov. i. 28, &c.

The righteous eateth in moderation, and yet 25
to the satisfying of his soul ; but the voracious
belly of the sensual wicked, shall suffer great
want.

Moderation of appetite. Desires and incomes ought to be proportioned. Honest industry lives in much content ; which is the truest happiness, Eccl. xii. 13. It is

* Or, there are some who, through sloth, are brought to want, Prov. x. 4, 29.—xi. 24 —xiii. 7. H.

We have profanely neglected thee, *O God*, and ourselves; not improving those faculties thou didst invest us with, nor using them in search and inquiry after thee, the author of our being and object of our happiness.

In the mouth of the *profane* foolish is a rod ³ of pride *, *to punish itself*, but the lips of the *pious* wife shall preserve them *out of great mischief*.

Government of the tongue. Self-conceit neglects superiors, and tramples upon inferiors. Strife indulged is its own punishment. Lips exercised to charity, are most conciliating. Impious sentiments darken the mind, deny consolation to the heart, and are destructive to society, Matth. xii. 23.

Where no oxen are *to labour*, the crib is ⁴ clean of food; but much increase of *that necessary support*, is by the *well employed* strength of the ox.

Industry. Means for working are essential to success. The right order of them is a sure sign of thriving. What is most necessary even for the world, is first to be sought, Deut. xxiv. 6. Prov. xiii. 23.

A faithful witness, *in any case*, will not lie: but a *familiarized* false witness will utter lies *in abundance*, nor scruple them upon oath.

Truth and lying. No temptation can be an excuse for deviating from *truth*; the foundation of all *justice*, Eph. iv. 25. Prevailing national falsehood portends instant national ruin. Prevaricating upon oath is the height of abandonedness, and most difficult to repent of, Zech. v. 3, &c. Mal. iii. 5, &c. Be tender in speaking.

* *Some, for the excellent. H.*

- 6 A *profane* scorner seeketh wisdom to *appearance* and yet findeth it not; but *beneficial* knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth the momentous nature of his own upright desire.

Uprightness and scorning. The ruling passion of a scoffer is to set aside all common opinions and truths. The worst are gradually led to this, by the love of favourite vice, Psal. i. 1, 2. Evidence and argument are lost upon such, Prov. ix. 8.—xiii. 1. To incline well and be diligent, is in good measure to understand what is essential. Honest men take evidence as it is. *Almighty God*, reason and nature, are with such. Scepticism is a state of dismal obscurity. *R.* It anxiously guards against satisfactory ideas.

- 7 Go with speed from the presence of a foolish speaking man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of pure and useful knowledge.

Foolishness to be avoided. To offend against clear divine will is the most shocking of all absurdities. The peaceable and patient of advice, have a claim to familiar intimacy. One who usurps the whole of discourse is an unprofitable companion. Beware of the seductive above every other. Leave passion to soften and cool.

- 8 The * wisdom of chief desire with the prudent, is to understand his way of right and useful behaviour; but the folly of fools, to cover their guilt is certain deceit.

Prudence and folly. Every wise traveller will consider the road in which he walks; to prevent hurt and wandering. So religion weighs things as they are; and not as evasive vice would have them. Stratagem must in

* Or, it is the wisdom of a wise man, to know himself; but it is the folly of fools to deceive themselves. *H.*

the end be obnoxious. All qualities and inclinations natural may be made subservient to the discovery of truth, and the exercise of virtue. *R.*

Impious * fools, more than every other, make a 9
mock at threatened punishments against sin; but
among the sober dispassionate righteous, there
is mutual favour, and that of heaven which is
everlasting.

The afflicted heart knoweth his own bitter- 10
ness; and a stranger to what is hid from human
view doth not neither intermeddle with his
prosperous joy.

Joy and sorrow. Of real happiness and misery, by
what is external, no sure judgement can be passed. The
advantages of outward fortune sometimes sharpen the
edge of sorrow. Divided griefs grow less, and joys in-
crease. Virtue gives peace to the soul, in midst of misfor-
tunes. *R.* Extreme grief cannot be uttered, and should
be treated with much lenity.

The apparently established house of the 11
wicked shall be overthrown in time; but the
frail tabernacle of the upright in virtue, shall
more and more flourish.

Houses established by virtue. Tremble for seeming secu-
rities upon fraud, robbery and blood. A homely dwel-
ling, which may be called one's own, is likeliest to be
permanent. Ornamented buildings often fall by their
own weight, or by a secret curse. They are obnoxious

* Or, sinners laugh at fools; but between the upright,
there is mutual good will. Or, sinners concealing themselves,
enter into feigned friendships; whereas, among the upright,
there is mutual good will. *H*

likewise to those who have cruelly suffered from their erection. Prodigal heirs consume, Job. v. 3, &c.

- 12 There is a way which, *from want of ingenuous attention*, seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are *to be numbered among the sure ways of tremendous death for both worlds*.

Self-deceit. Appearances of good ruin the unwary. What we wish *from treacherous appetite*, to be reasonable and just, we too often believe to be so, Eccl. ix. 12. A near approach of death and judgement opens men's eyes. Practical errors are the most fatal of any, John iii. 19.—vii. 24.

Let not, *O Lord*, the suggestions of sense, and the heats of passion, and the vicious customs of the world, and the false principles of unreasonable men, deceive us into any dangerous mistakes about our true blessedness; as if our pursuit of that were to be directed, not by the truth of things, and the designs of thee in our creation, but by the exorbitant motions of lust and humour, and by the arbitrary pleasure of ourselves.

- 13 Even in *mad riotous* laughter, the heart is *often* sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is *complicate* heaviness.

True and false joy. Airs of jovialty and freedom are assumed by the sons of vice, to betray others; and by way of self-vindication. The principles of virtue are too deep laid, to be entirely ejected. When vicious amusement is over, vengeful reflection succeeds. The wicked man is at once an idolater and an enemy of his own nature. R. When *passions* are satisfied, then comes *remorse*.

We thank thee, *gracious God*, who hast convinced us by the operations of our nature, that we have hearts greater than the world; and that we are made for what is more excellent; that as there is none upon earth that we can desire, in comparison of thee, so there is none in heaven,

but thou that makest angels and thyself happy, that can make us so.

The backslider in heart, *from right principles and conduct*, shall be filled with *the sad effects of his own evil ways*; and a good *sincere man, on the other hand*, shall be satisfied from *within himself*. 14

Happiness. They sin with peculiar aggravations, who have had some former experience of that which is good. Horror and pain can be diverted from vice only for a while. What so great a feast as inward peace? Prov. i. 31. Every hour sits easy upon a good man, who knows what to do. Who can sufficiently praise a cool candid temper. An empire over passions and desires is more glorious and satisfactory than the false lustre of royalty *R.* By dependence upon thee, *our God*, and by obedience to thee, do thou refine and enlarge our faculties, which are appropriated unto thee! Make them fit for that employment which is above; and wherein the happiness of all reasonable beings doth consist!

The *credulous simple* believeth every *specious word*, and is *misled by them to extreme hurt*; but the prudent *inquiring man* looketh well to *what affects his religious and moral goings*, and is *safe*. 15

Prudence and simplicity. The proper sphere of prudence is action, when cases are difficult. Varying conduct is suspicious; but what is inconsistent, most culpably weak and disgraceful. Cautious procedure is a credit to both nature and profession, Eph. v. 15. Quick and easy application of rules, argues common sense, and is of more value than much literature. *Faith* ought ever to be proportioned to *evidence*.

A *prudently wise man* feareth *situations of* 16

danger and thus departeth from evil; but the weak rash fool rageth at opposition to his pleasure, and is confident that no harm can befall till misery undeceives him.

Cool and hasty tempers. Caution is a proof of discernment, whereas ignorance and perversity are dangerously rash, Prov. xxviii. 14. Hearken to advice, rather than to inclination. Years of repentance sometimes make not up for one blind passionate hour. Youth is most in danger. Sovereign reason ought ever to be the rule of will, *R*; and that the greater our concerns are.

- 17 He that is soon angry, *from either real or supposed injuries*, dealeth foolishly; and a man of more secret fullen wicked devices is as much hated as the other exposeth himself.

Anger and malice. To govern wrath is a chief point of religion, and essential to happiness. Speedy resentment both says and does often what is ridiculous; and who can stand before deep pre-meditating malice? Deliberate revenge is the guilt of a little soul, and usually frustrates its own end. Such have few friends, and must lose many good offices. An open enemy is generous, compared with a still one.

- 18 The ignorant simple, *from frequent misconduct*, would seem to inherit folly; but the foreseeing thoughtful prudent are crowned with various beneficial effects of their own knowledge.

The prudent and simple. Those who choose ignorance from carelessness, must suffer. Even plain useful principles and rules are hid from them, Prov. xxiii. 23. Human faculties unexercised will diminish. The noblest lustre of our rational nature is religious virtue. Weak minds are ever in uncertainty. *R*.

The evil in common, bow down before the good; 19
and the wicked, *much contrary to their wills, do wait as suppliants* at the gates of the righteous.

Honour and shame. Promotion is a natural and often an immediate effect of well used understanding. Such become necessary to the public when it wearies of others. The proper boast of rank and trust is good behaviour. Multiplying evil acts brings on disgraceful ruin. An obliging manner makes many friends, Eth. v. 6, 7.

The poor is *too frequently* hated, even of his 20
own door-neighbour, *only because he is poor*; but the rich, *be he ever so worthless*, hath *just as often* many *base flattering* friends.

Riches and poverty. Conditions of nearly equal want, should lead to mutual sympathy. Yet where misery is most felt, there is often least compassion. Present interest with such is their chief associating motive. Riches and desire of usefulness should go together.

He that despiseth his *afflicted* neighbour, 21
sinneth himself to sure punishment; but he that hath mercy on the *miserable* poor, happy is he *in his disposition, in his exercise, and in his promised recompences*.

Mercy. Not to aid want is to despise, Jam. ii. 13, &c. Get as soon over the first difficulty of giving as possible. A generous joyous habit, is the highest prerogative of outward distinction. May none of our pleasures taste, till this is experimentally known.

We bless thee, *O our God*, for the secret principle of divine truth, which controuls all wickedness from within; and which we can neither prevent, nor suppress! Enable us successfully to accomplish the designs of thee, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, against the impressions of sense, the violence of passion and the customs of sin!

- 22 Do they not *exceedingly* err *against their own enjoyment*, that devise evil *to others*? But * *the ineffable delights of pure communicative mercy and truth shall be to them that devise even more good than their hand can do.*

Mercy. Compassion is natural to the uncorrupted. Beneficence therefore must be a sound blessing. To plot hurt and ruin, is the temper of miserable hell. Such as lay mischievous snares, are frequently caught in them. The sublime of generosity, is liberal devisement, Isa. xxxii. 8, &c. And of blessedness likewise. Even the modest and timorous dare apply to them. Employ *thought*, where *power* is wanting.

- 23 In all *honest* labour, there is *sure permanent* profit; but the *mere* talk of the lips *upon important things* tendeth only to *certain lasting* penury.

Labour and speaking. Most lawful callings are sufficient to reward the diligent. High talk about business can never excuse indolence. Beggary and boasting are near a-kin. It is good to save the time, which others lose in vain speeches, Eccl. i. 3, 4. Prov. x. 19.

- 24 The crown of the *laborious* wife, *even for this world*, is their *honestly acquired* riches; but *what indicates to all* the foolishness of *sluggard* fools, is the *sad visible and long continued effects* of their folly.

Riches and poverty. Wealth gives influence and extensive power to be useful. Such too, are apt to be observed and imitated. They are dreadful to vice, when vested with authority. A conspicuous fool is

* *Rather* since. H.

painful to hear of; and still more to see. People are rich, according to the use they make of wealth.

A true witness delivereth souls *from trouble*; 25
but a deceitful witness * speaketh *distressing*
lies.

True and false witnessing. Bravely to stand up in the defence of truth and right is blisful to the innocent, and public at large. To preserve *credit* is to preserve *life*. Equivocal expressions in witnessing is falsehood; and upon oath is perjury, Mal. iii. 5. Eph. iv. 25.

In the *well established* fear of the Lord, by 26
devout acts, is a strong ground of confidence
for *success*; and his children after him, shall
have a place of refuge in the *friendship* of both
heaven and earth.

Religion profitable. *Slavish* fear casteth out all confidence; whereas that which is *filial*, rejoiceth and maketh strong, Job xxxi. 23. Piety is a steadfast principle of good; and leads to blessed hope. Godly parents transmit both their excellencies and delights. Such increase with their being opposed. R.

The fear of the Lord is a *sure fountain* of 27
happiness through life; to depart in *particular*
from the snares of the *wicked*, leading to *pre-*
mature death.

Religion and happiness. Nothing refreshes or abides equal to devout content. Fear weighs attentively the true nature and value of objects. No temporal evil is to be compared with the displeasure of heaven.

We bless thee, O God, for that religious society on earth, which prepares us for the blessed society in hea-

* Or *breathes out*.

ven ; and that those actions which are made by *nature* reasonable, are made by *Christianity* religious.

- 28 In the multitude of *well governed* people is the king's *safe* honour ; but in the want of *such* people is the *certain* destruction of the *country* and prince *himself*.

Public happiness and misery. The good of subjects ought ever to be the end of rule. Arbitrary enslaving measures are not tolerable, Rom. xiii. 4. Loss of love soon ends in murmurs and rebellion. Mutual regard is a strong indissoluble bond. Happy land whose sovereignty is limited by law.

- 29 He that is slow to wrath, *and to its impulses*, is of great *beneficial* understanding ; but he that is hasty of spirit, exalteth *the folly of visible procedure to all*.

Anger. Believe not the first appearance of what would irritate ; but attend to probable alleviating circumstances. Peace is preferable to various outward advantages. The credit of a wise man rarely accompanies one who deals in proud wrath. They cannot long hide their shame.

- 30 A sound *benevolent* heart is the *cheering* life of the flesh ; but *grudging* envy of *what doth profit others*, is like the *incurable* rottenness which has penetrated to the *very* bones.

Benevolence and envy. Self-government, like one of good bodily constitution, is full of ease. To rejoice with others in their good, is a true charitable frame, for alleviating human ills ; whereas malicious envy scarce admits a cure. How dreadful to pine at prosperous worth ; and live upon their wretchedness ! To be, and to do good, is the way to be avenged of them. Calum.

nies indicate the sure existence of envy. A good conscience with the joy of beneficence are unspeakable, Prov. xv. 13.

He that, *by additional miseries*, oppresseth the *known* poor, reproacheth his *wise* maker; but he that honoureth him, *who allots such heavy trials*, hath *substantial* relieving mercy on the poor sufferer. 31

Beneficence and cruelty. The less able any one is to resist, the more base and cowardly is it to injure. Superiors are made to reward those who accommodate them. Oppressors fight with power, that will one day be an overmatch for them, Jam. v. 1, &c. Pitying beneficence, is as in the stead of heaven to the indigent; and cannot fail of an adequate reward. Cruelty diffuses every where hatred and discord, and the hellish passions. R.

The wicked * is driven away *from all resources*, by dying in his wickedness; but the *sincere humble* righteous hath *gladdening* hope, in *agonies* of his death. 32

Deaths of the good and bad. What through life amuses the impenitent vicious, will not do so at last. The apprehension of future punishment, leaves them comfortless and distracted. Then conscience is established in full power; and as their just fear of *God's* wrath is, so is their torture. Divine assurances never fail, Psal. xxiii. 4.

Suffer us not, *O Lord*, to desist from the study of wisdom, till we become wise unto salvation; or from the practice of holiness, till we see thee in glory; that by the sympathy there will then be between our faculties, and our religion, we may be accomplished, and prepared for an everlasting future bliss.

* Or *sinketh under his calamity.* H.

- 33 Wisdom resteth *silent* in the heart of him that hath good understanding, *till there is a proper time to speak*; but that *small portion thereof* which is in the midst of fools is *improperly made known, and serves by this means to expose them.*

Speaking in season. True wisdom thinks of use, and not pride of ostentation. Some have only a few select subjects and anecdotes, which they incessantly broach, and wear out people. Success of good designs hang often upon previous wise counsel and secrecy.

- 34 *The prevalence of righteousness among all ranks exalteth the reputation, and power, and grandeur of a nation*; but *sin much increased is a ruining reproach to any people.*

National prosperity. Social virtues are inseparable from social strength; whereas, general vice is sure destruction. Much depends upon the impartial executing of well formed laws, Jer. xviii. 8. Valour, conquest, luxury, anarchy, is the fatal common circle.

Cause us, *O good God*, by such converse as truth and justice, as knowledge and wisdom make safe and delightful, to enjoy others, and to enjoy ourselves; to communicate to, and receive to the transcendent mutual comfort, and satisfaction of the whole.

- 35 The *good king's* favour is toward a wife *behaving* * *servant*; but his *just* wrath is against him that *by his wicked carelessness, causeth public shame.*

Favour and wrath of kings. In the *body politic*, as in the *natural*, each member should contribute something to the common life. R. Subordination of ranks ought to

* Or minister. H.

be preserved ; without exposing the *nobler* to envy, or the *meaner* to contempt. *R.* Paternal love is due from kings, Psal. ci. 1, &c.



C H A P. XV.

I*N the case of threatening contest, a soft answer given turneth away wrath ; but grievous exasperating words stir up anger to the height of rage.*

Soft and grievous words. From inadvertent escapes of the tongue, even good people may be mistaken, Jam. iii. 1, &c. Some have diabolical pleasure in fomenting and perpetuating quarrels. Small beginnings often issue in dreadful retaliations. Even truths and trusts of secrecy are little regarded at the time. Wrath and weakness of mind are usually conjoined. Conquest over passion is glorious, 1 Pet. ii. 20, &c.—iii. 8, &c.

The tongue of the wise useth knowledge * 2
*in season, and aright ; but the mouth of rash
fools poureth out in abundance words of foolish-
ness, leading to mischiefs.*

Good and bad use of the tongue. Wisdom is the application of knowledge. Occasions and circumstances prove the man of real understanding. The more he is known, the more he is sought after. Say nothing derogatory to a virtuous character, Jam. i. 19, &c. Col. iv. 6.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, 3

* Or giveth grace to their wisdom, Num. xxiv. 5. Gen. xlix. 15. *H.*

beholding the evil, *to avenge their impenitent guilt*, and the good *on purpose to reward them*.

God omniscient and impartial. A deep sense of divine inspection is a sure principle of universal virtue, Psal. xxxvi. 1, &c.—cxxxix. 1, &c. He sees and will judge of what is most secret. Bitter afflictions are not hid from him.

- 4 A wholesome tongue *ever aiming at good is, for sweetness and benefit, as * a tree of life*: but perverseness therein is a *sure † breach in the self enjoying spirit*.

Management of discourse. A person in health feels easy, equal and usefully communicative; so the face of a kind speaker shines, and their remembrance is felt. They shade as a covering from blasts. Breaches of friendship are made by bad tongues. In conversation, each person, as in commerce, should be allowed to furnish something of his own. *R.* Happy they, who reduce every thing to *simple principles*; and throw, by this means, light upon obscure points. *R.*

- 5 A *vain wicked fool despiseth even his father's gentle instruction*; but he that regardeth reproof *itself, however painful at the time, is illustriously prudent*.

Instruction and reproof. There is little hope of those who would walk, when weakest, without a support. Special *trust* is due to authority, experience and love. Reproach and ruin convince too late. Success is the ordinary child of prudence. Strong passions blind even good natural understandings. *R.*

In the house of the righteous is much

* Or, *the tree of life*. H. † Or *like a destructive blast*, Isa. xxvii. 8 Jer. iv. 6. Zeph. i. 10.

comfortably enjoyed treasure; but in the ill acquired revenues of the wicked, however abundant, is heart-felt trouble.

Honest and ill acquired wealth. The power of lawful riches is both great and lasting, Deut. xxviii. 17. Contentment is treasure. The sight of criminal purchases is grievous, Hag. i. 6. Prov. x. 2.

May we, *O Lord*, under these convictions, be ever able to recommend our souls and bodies into thy hands; that whether we wake or sleep, live or die, we may be ever with thee, secure of thy favour, and blessed by divine resemblances!

The lips of the *generous* wise disperse *useful* 7 knowledge; but the *contracted* heart of the foolish doeth not so *profit others*.

Useful speech. To improve multitudes yields pure delight. Want of power is a misfortune; but to hurt with it is hellish. The same things repeated may charm from newness of manner. *R.* Pleasures of conversation cement *love. R.*

The sacrifice and prayer of the *obstinate* 8 wicked is abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the *obedient* upright, is his *peculiar* delight.

True and false devotion. To evade by irreligious forms the substantials of religion is, and ever must be, detestable, Mic. vi. 6, &c. Isa. i. 11, &c. It is worse than vain to flatter *omniscience*. The best returns of prayer are increase of virtues. *God* understands mute language no less than words. *R.* How sublime a thing is religious simplicity. *R.*

The *false, unjust, cruel* way of the wicked is an abomination unto the *pure, all-perfect*

Lord: but he loveth him *unalterably* that followeth *hard* after every kind of righteousness.

Virtue and vice. A good conscience, and the favour of God, is like a well of life. Purposes and actions habitual are a man's way. Those of the wicked are politic at best. Love of holiness leads to eminent progresses, Phil. iii. 13. Matth. v. 6. Morality and good policy do mutually support and fortify.

Suffer us not, *O gracious God*, to seek for contentment in such possessions as are worldly; but in the employment of our higher faculties about thee, upon which is impressed the image of the *father of spirits*, and which have a special reserve for thee, and suitableness to thee!

- 10 *Even mild* correction is grievous to him that forsaketh *knowingly* the good way; and he that *altogether* hateth reproof, shall die under *wretched* guilt.

Reproof. Conscience terrifying guilt, makes the rebukes of a friend odious. Such wicked are often early cut off. They must be honest and brave, who abide by truth. *R.*

- 11 *Dark* * *hell itself* and destruction, *which leads to it*, are full before the Lord; how much more then the *most concealed* hearts of the children of men?

Divine omniscience. An ever-present deity must be all-knowing, Psal. cxxxix. 7, &c. Job xxvi. 6. It is the *essence of God* that supports all his works, Jer. xvii. 10. 1 Cor. iv. 5, &c. Religious credit will ever brighten. Leave defence to *sovereign reason*. *R.*

- 12 A scorner of good loveth not one that re-

* *Or the grave.*

proveth him *ever so justly*; neither will he go unto the wife, *for such reason, if possible*.

Reproof. Habits of evil darken the mind; and harden the heart. To droll with things sacred is an irreclaimable symptom; and often terminates in mean superstition.

We confess, *O Lord God*, who searchest the hearts, and triest the reins, and knowest what is in man, that we have sinned against thee, contrary to gratitude and conscience; and by long custom enslaved ourselves. Suffer us not to add stupifying opinions, that would lead us to expect a change to be wrought by thee in our last moments, which is a work of time, and the ordained exercise of our faculties!

A merry heart, *from sincere goodness*, maketh 13
a cheerful *captivating* countenance: but by sorrow of heart, *under sense of guilt*, the spirit is broken *to the clouding of pleasant looks*.

Cheerfulness and sorrow. Body and mind do sensibly affect each other. Virtuous joy forgets slight affliction. Carnal mirth adds to disease and wretchedness. It is dastardly and enfeebling, Prov. xiv. 32.—xxviii. 1.

Blessed God, when we shall attain to the resurrection of the just, may we be clothed with bodies which are spiritual; and behold this world reduced to ashes without regret: knowing that we have a far better state which never can be changed, and an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The heart of him that hath good under- 14
standing seeketh *close after sound practical* knowledge: but the mouth of fools, *out of a vain corrupted state*, feedeth upon *effects of extreme pestive* foolishness.

Sound knowledge. What a soul delights in becomes an object of chief pursuit. The man of understanding is

silent before those who are able and willing to instruct; whereas the wicked are fond of corrupting error. Insignificant discourse itself is odious. The mind should be habituated to discover essential truth. *R.* Some adopt all vulgar opinions as principles, in order to degrade religion, and make it seem monstrous. *R.*

Grant, *O merciful God*, that when we shall appear before thy tribunal, to receive our final sentence, and our eternal portion, we may be found in full reconciliation with thy nature and will; and be able to lift up our heads with joy before the face of the *father of our spirits*, knowing that our redemption from sin and misery is fulfilled: and that we shall be ever with *God*, to be made unspeakably blessed.

- 15 All the days of the afflicted, *by means of transgression*, are evil; but he that is of a *righteous merry heart*, hath a continual *secret feast*.

Conscience good and bad. An anxious distrustful temper must be miserable, Matth. vi. 34. Prudent foresight may prevent and alleviate troubles, Phil. iv. 6, 7. There is no order in vice.

When those frail and mortal bodies, *O God*, shall decay and turn into dust, may our souls ascend with the greatest ardours of divine love to those regions of holiness where pure and heavenly minds find the most agreeable company and employment; and where there is nothing to disturb their repose, or to interrupt their exercises for ever.

- 16 Better is *a little substance* with the *wise fear of the Lord*, than great treasure and trouble *of mind* therewith.

Religion and happiness. Sound composing principles and manners yield an equal and abiding joy. If pure devotion be wanting *probity* fails of course, Psal. xxxvii. 16. Under gilded appearances there is often fore di-

fracture contracting desires is the way to become rich. It is easier to live without wealth, than to improve it properly. A little of *God* will do what the *world* without him cannot. The best worship is a solemn vow, for ever to love virtue.

Grant, *O God*, that we may be of that happy company, who shall follow their triumphant *Lord and Saviour*, with songs of gratitude and extacy into those mansions where they shall keep an eternal sabbath; and where *God* is for ever glorified and adored of all those that have believed in him, to the saving of their souls

Better is a dinner of *plain* herbs, where *mutual unfeigned* love is; than a stalled ox, in *various forms of food*, and *jarring* hatred therewith. 17

Love and contentment. Noble convivial souls make almost any thing good, Prov. xxiii. 6, &c. Job xxxi. 6, &c. The professions of insincere minds are hateful. True love doth eminently sweeten domestic life, Psal. cxxxiii. This is put into every persons power. No affluence can make up for the want of engaging looks and deeds, Psal. lv. 12, &c.

A *peevish* wrathful man stirreth up strife: 18
but he that is slow to anger is *peaceable* himself, and appeaseth strife to the utmost.

Peaceableness and wrath. Quick incautious tempers do widen differences from mere trifles. Outward signs of displeasure should be well weighed, Prov. xv. 1, Matth. v. 5, 9. Contention is a chief plague in human life. True politeness excludes at the same time *insensibility*, and too much *earnestness*. It forgets *self* in order to seek what may be agreeable to others. *R.* Wrath injures health.

The way of the slothful man is as *among* 19
croppings from an hedge of thorns: but the

way of the *diligent* righteous is made up to honour, and plain.

Diligence and sloth. The indolent soon despair and give over. At best they creep as through brambles. Honest action is a chief part of duty; and does not easily take fright. His work becomes not only practicable, but pleasant. Let zeal be ever proportioned to the value of things.

- 20 A wise *obedient* son maketh a glad father: but a foolish *refractory* man despiseth *the comfort even of his tender indulgent* mother.

Filial duty. Gratitude ought to be warm and incessant, chap. x. 1. Understanding without good works is worse than none. Parental joy from the honour and usefulness of children is not to be expressed. Moral excellence is a striking beauty. To live against early good education brings gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

- 21 *Wicked prevailing folly in the world* is joy to him that is destitute of *sound wisdom, and pled for his own excuse*; but a man of real understanding, *in the face of such opposition, walketh uprightly to the end.*

Uprightness and folly. To take pleasure in those who transgress is extreme vice. Sincere virtue excepts against no part of duty.

Most blessed God, the Creator of all things, and the author of all good, help us to remember and shew ourselves men! Being made for the imitation of thee, in righteousness and true holiness, may we cheerfully render that homage and glory, to thy most gracious paternal indulgence; upon the continuance whereof we can expect any enjoyment and mercy whatever!

- 22 Without *previous counsel, from men of experience and solid judgement, even great purposes*

are *often* disappointed; but in the multitude of *such* counsellors, they are established.

Counsel. Rashness is ever hazardous. It is no excuse for want of success, to say, we did not think and advise. Some disappointments are not to be helped, Prov. xii. 7.

A man hath joy, by the *suitable* answer of 23
his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how *extensively* good is it?

Seasonable words. It is every one's duty, to seek advice, when they have opportunity and power. Likewise, to give. What an immediate satisfaction to be acting upon the side of right! Truth at once enlightens and inflames. *R.*

The way of *happy* life is above *mere animal* 24
demands to the wise: that he may * depart from *snarcs* which lead to the pit of hell beneath.

Rational and animal living. Regard to happiness, in the way of perfection, is the chief end of life. Wicked men take up with mere shadows of good. Bodily enjoyment, without that of the spirit, is degrading ruinous. The objects of religion are high and noble. They lead to resemble him who is the *blessed and only Potentate*. Death and the grave are just emblems of wretchedness, Isa. xiv. 9, &c. Virtue can be fully rewarded only in heaven. *R.*

Teach us, *O Lord*, to consider what the special nature, employment and satisfaction of reasonable spirits are; and in comparison to which those of bodies upon which we now dote, are no more than mansions, in which our spirits dwell, and instruments which they use! Make us mindful, that all we can suffer or enjoy is in our souls, which are ourselves; and that according as these are af-

* Or turn his back. *H.*

fected, so we are pleased, or displeased, so we joy or sorrow, so we live or die for ever.

- 25 The Lord will *tear up, and utterly* destroy the house of the proud *oppressor, be it ever so flourishing*; but he will *both extend and establish* the * border of the *much leased* † widow by him.

Proud oppression. Haughtiness from affluence is by far too common. They who live in luxurious ease soon become cruel strangers to the sufferings of others, Ezek. xvi. 49. Am. vi. 3. Tears make a loud cry for severe vengeance, Exod. xxii. 22.

May we have a firm belief of what shall be hereafter, *O righteous God*, that it may have a continual and powerful influence upon us, for the balancing and overruling all those violences of passion, and all those vicious inclinations, by which we are tempted to sin and perish!

- 26 The thoughts of the wicked *lead to words which* are an abomination to the Lord; but the words of the *pure mind and heart* are pleasant *profitable* words.

Thoughts and words. They who shut out *God*, from their minds, make sure easy way for what contradicts his holy nature and will. Words do natively issue from an inward habit. Devout kindnesses are highly ornamenting. The smallest allowed desire, contrary to *God's* order, is a transgression on his rights. *R.* He is delicate in his love, and cannot suffer a divided heart. *R.*

- 27 He that is *so greedy of gain, as to set aside the poor from his right*, troubleth his own house *in the end*; but he that hateth *and spurns*

* Or land-mark, Deut. xix. 14. Ex. xxiii. 31. H.

† Peculiarly calamitous, and put for every other in want.

eth the offer of bribing gifts, shall live long and happy.

Avarice. Every sort and degree of covetousness, is disturbative. The joyous, in themselves, diffuse like feelings among others. He who robs is in perpetual danger from discovery. A premature death often frustrates the end of all their endeavours, Hab. ii. 9, &c. Giving and receiving bribes is accumulated baseness, chap. xi. 17, 29.

The heart of the righteous studieth to answer *beneficially*; but the mouth of the *unthinking froward* wicked poureth out *at all hazards* evil things. 28

Hearts good and bad. Religious deliberation speaks to purpose, Psal. xxxvii. 30, 31. Things ill timed, though just and true, may thereby become evil.

The Lord is *as one* far off from the wicked 29
man's petition; but he heareth *with acceptance*
the *humble ingenuous* prayer of the righteous.

Prayer. Between God's essential and comforting presence, there is a wide difference. The wicked do not pray in effect; but speak and dissemble. Even bad natures will *howl* under trouble, though without *hope*. Divine homage fits for the contemplation of truth. R. Each man is then made better for his devotions, when he lives more soberly, righteously and godly by them. There is a close connection between that *religious worship* which is sincere, and that *religious obedience* which is necessary, Psal. xxxiv. 13, &c.

Make it our *delight*, O Lord, in religious exercises, so to contemplate thy divine holiness, as that we may gain such resemblances, as will distinguish our spirits for those whom thou wilt own, and delight in for ever!

The light of *what is agreeable* to the eyes 30

rejoiceth the *pious benevolent* heart; and a good report to any one's advantage maketh the bones as it were *seem fat and strong*.

Pious and charitable joy. A sense of divine favour is sweeter than light itself, Psal. iv. 6. That of men like God comes nearest to this. Look above the creature to the Creator, and be blessed. What is most wonderful is not sufficiently admired, because common. R.

- 31 The ear that *patiently* heareth the reproof of *sound judgement leading to life* abideth in *close fellowship* among the wise.

Reproof, and good company. To advise and be advised mark the character of true friendship. They mutually encourage. Good conversation polishes the young.

Let not the difficulties we may meet with, O God, in performing our duty of repentance, and renewing our obedience from the effect of former unreasonable and unnatural use of ourselves, ever discourage our resolution!

- 32 He that refuseth instruction, to *correct what has been amiss*, despiseth the profits of his own soul, but he that *obediently* heareth just reproof getteth *more understanding than ever*.

Wisdom and ignorance. The unwilling to learn hold their truest happiness cheap, and must perish. Words of the wise are as goads and nails skilfully applied, Eccl. xii. 11. At one time the credulous are *enthusiasts*, at another, *free-thinkers*. R.

- 33 The *humble* fear of the Lord is the *principal* instruction of *true wisdom*: and before *exalting* honour is *such devout submissive* humility.

Piety and humility. Sound morals, and credit, go to

gether. Devotion is the support of both. Modesty leads to conceal talents, or to discover them with much diffidence. *R.* God rarely fails to punish an insatiable thirst of dominion. *R.*

Make us happy, by communion with thee, *our most glorious, and gracious Lord*, by the rectitude of our nature, and by the habits of righteousness, which are the state of religion in us, that we may experience our duty to be our privilege !



CHAP. XVI.

THE preparations *for disposing well* of the heart in man, and the *suitable answer* of the tongue *likewise*, is from the *piously acknowledged* Lord.

Heart and tongue. A sense of deity ought to be improved by means of his own appointment. Even the commonest operations of life cannot perform without him, Acts xvii. 28. He can overawe the eloquent, and lift up the modest to bold beneficial utterance. Upright dependent endeavours will not be allowed finally to err. Human understanding alone can never attain to the knowledge of divine things. R.

All the ways of a man, *from self partiality,* 2
are *apt to appear* clean in his own eyes: but
the *omniscient* Lord weigheth the *inmost recesses*
of the spirits.

Self-deceit. Most people look only to the fair side of their own characters. Divine judgement reaches both principle and affection, 1 Cor. iv. 4. Psal. xix. 12.

Love of truth is a chief bond of union among the religious. *R.* Men are often more tenacious of their own inventions, than of clear divine appointments, Matth. xv. 9. *Self-love* seduces, and false good dazzles. *R.*

- 3 Often and deliberately commit thy works unto the Lord; and thy *designing* * thoughts shall be well established.

Prayer. Impious pride, of all others, was not made for man. To trust *God*, in the use of upright endeavours, is the way to avoid solicitude, Psal. xxxv. 5, &c. Phil. iv. 6. He is willing to *aid*, but not to *force* free intelligences. *R.* Love is that worship which is most worthy of him. *R.* This he requires for the good of his creatures. In prayer we adore divine authority, justify his laws, and put our consciences under a distinct obligation to duty.

- 4 The Lord hath made all things † for the display of himself; yea even the wicked to be upheld for the day of inflicting evil.

Glory of God. To communicate happiness must have been the spring of divine acting. For that very end, a day of severe recompence became necessary, Psal. xvii. 13, &c. 2 Pet. ii. 9. Contempt for religion can only proceed from ignorance. *R.* *God* can draw an *infinite good*, from a *transient evil*.

Remind us, O most *great and good God*, of our first original, and of our last end; that as we began, so we may terminate in thee, and not forsake thee, by obstinate impenitency, which cannot but be subject to thy power, and fall at last under hideous vengeance. Convince us, that, as the perfection of righteousness is in thee, so thou must either overcome all unrighteousness, or be affronted eternally by the prevalence of it!

* Compare Prov. xvi. 18.—xv. 22.—xxix. 21.

† Or instrumental to his purposes.

Every one that is proud in heart, *to the neglect of pious regards*, is an abomination to the Lord *, *therefore*, though hand join in hand with much firmness of purpose, he shall not always be left unpunished. 5

Impious pride. Ranks and dignities are but the shadows of grandeur. R. Unless when accompanied with merit, only outward homage will be paid them.

We confess, O Lord, that we have made ourselves less than the least of all thy mercies, and obnoxious to thy justice and displeasure, by our repeated acts of sinning against thee. Enable us to repent, and turn to thee, and do works meet for *repentance*!

By mercy *to the poor*, and truth of *adherence* 6
to divine discoveries, former defilement of iniquity is † purged off; and by the fear of the Lord afterwards, men depart from committing the like evil.

Mercy, truth, and the fear of God. Charitable works do ever accompany true penitence; Dan. iv. 27. Forgetfulness of God prepares for the worst crimes. Let no impenitent sinner think of his prayers, as an appeasing equivalent instead of obedience.

When a man's ways please the *supreme* 7
all-perfect Lord, he often maketh even his worst enemies to be at peace with him.

Favour of God. The wise, for themselves, trust those of principle more than any other, 1 Pet. iii. 13. Goodness endears and softens, Isa. xi. 9. Rom. xiv. 18.

Whereas, O holy God, the habits of sin have been established in us, give, hereafter, such time and resolution

* He that engageth in conspiracy, shall come to harm. H.

† Or cancelled. H.

as are necessary for the recovery of ourselves ! Help us to work out all dispositions which are vicious, and by degrees to resettle conscience and reason in a blissful capacity for communion with thee !

- 8 Better is a little, *for pure regular enjoyment*, with * righteousness ; than great *amassed* revenues without *conscientious* right.

Upright wealth and poverty. Much of good character and comfort depend upon mutual fidelity. Glare of wealth blinds the bulk of mankind. Money ill acquired cannot abide reflection, Jam. v. 4, &c. Jer. xvii. 11. To be contented with small matters argues a noble pious mind.

Blessed God, we praise and magnify thee, the *father of our spirits*, for the glorious original of our nature, and for the glorious design of our creation. That thou hast made our faculties such, that they are greater than this world, too good for it, and cannot be satisfied with it. They are, by their exaltation, appropriated unto thee, fit for, and capable of thee.

- 9 A man's heart deviseth his way, *to obtain profit* ; but the *overruling* Lord directeth his steps, *for a more general lasting good*.

Providence. Human powers are limited, to render them piously dependent. Ungodly presumption is complete foolishness, Jam. iv. 13, &c. Since the first mover has so much power and wisdom, he must be ready to succour those who have need of his aid. R.

Life of all beings shew thyself to me ; make me to know what thou art, and what I am ; come and succour me, in the most needy states ! R.

- 10 A divine *equitable* sentence is in the lips of the *wise, faithful* king ; his mouth, *under*

* Or *honesty*. H.

celestial rule, transgresseth not in solemn judgement.

Kings. All judges and magistrates are accountable. Their crimes notwithstanding should be mildly and usefully censured, Rom. xiii. 1, &c. Sound understanding and integrity are the glories of high office, 1 Kings iii. 25, &c. Job xxix. 16, &c.

A just weight and balance, *for commerce*, are 11
the Lord's *express ordination*; and all the
weights of the bag are *to him, as his own com-
plete work.*

Justice. Equitable standards in carrying on business are essential to good order, Deut. i. 16.—xxv. 13. That can be no small matter, which has been so attended to by infinite love, Mic. vi. 10.

It is an abomination to kings, *above every* 12
other, to commit wickedness; * for the throne
itself is established by righteousness.

Kings. The examples of the great have an immediate good or bad effect. Hence their iniquity is aggravated. Equity is more than strength. Happy prince, who reigns in the hearts of his subjects! Psal. ci. 1, &c.

Blessed be thou, *our God*, who hast repeated, and reinforced the laws of religion, by supernatural discoveries; and thus hast given all advantage for being virtuous, and god-like, and happy!

True righteous lips are the delight of *judi-* 13
cious kings: and they love him *even to rapture*
that speaketh right *at all hazards.*

Truth for kings. To say what should be, and not what is, is the way to win upon superiors. Faithful counsel,

* Or, *because.* H

though uneasy at the time, obtains due praise afterwards. Sovereign power ought to be well directed.

- 14 The wrath of a king, *however causeless*, is as messengers of death; * but a wise *faithful* man will pacify it, *through time*.

Kings' love and wrath. Death in dismal apprehension is to repeat it over and over, Esth. vii. 8. Approved integrity is a man's best vindication joined with mild prudence. To *command* with moderation, and to *obey* with readiness, is a sound political state. R.

- 15 In the *smiling* light of the good king's countenance is *the happiness of life*, to those who come nigh him; and his *experienced* favour is as a *fertilizing* cloud, full of the latter rain.

Kings' love. Sovereign affection may, and should be fought, by all fair means. Love may be read in most people's looks, Psal. iv. 6.—xi. 7. Power and wealth conjoined afford various means for doing good. Governors should reward, as well as punish.

- 16 How much better is it to get *directing* wisdom *through life*, than gold *which perisheth*? and to get *the use of right* understanding, rather to be chosen, than *the finest* of silver.

Wisdom. An improved mind, with suitable practice, leads to lasting esteem. It is a strange proof of human weakness, to labour chiefly for what will be soon over; and which, being alone, has no merit.

Blessed God, as thou hast distinguished us from the beasts that perish, by thy creation of us, and hast exalted us above them; and given us faculties and capacities which are not in them, so let us act up to our natural dignity and elevation; and never be persuaded, that

* *Rather, yet. H.* † *Or the fatness of. H.*

what is the full satisfaction of an inferior nature, may be so to ours !

The *chosen* high-way of the upright is to 17
depart from *all known* evil : and he that *thus*
afterwards keepeth his way of *sincere* virtue,
preserveth the *sure* peace of his own soul.

Uprightness and peace. The good are in heart what they seem to be. Their path is clear and lifted up. Conscience must not be bribed. This suggests minute delicate acting.

Make us happy, O Lord, by the practice of that duty we were made for ; and reconcile our minds to thy service, as that which is our perfect freedom and our greatest privilege !

Habitual pride goeth before destruction ; 18
and *even* a *less* degree of haughty spirit before a *severe* fall.

Pride and wo. Love of precedence generally defeats itself. How ill does this become a frail necessitous condition ? God will stand up in good time, for the friendless and impotent, Mal. iv. 1.

Better it is to be of an humble *patient* spirit 19
with the lowly *in their own eyes*, than for a
time, to divide the † *spoil of wealth* with the
cruel *oppressive* proud.

Humility and pride. Nothing can long conceal the extreme evil of vice. Meek contentment yields pure and regular delight. To sit low is often to sit safe, Psa. xlv. 4. Such too are accessible and useful.

He that handleth a matter *for practice* wisely 20
shall find *much* rejoicing good ; and who so,

* Or chief concern of, &c. † Or plunder. H.

*thus behaving, trusteth also in the Lord *, happy is he in every outward state.*

Knowledge and trust in God. To attempt what we have no ability for is criminal, and exposes to sure disgrace. Ponder seriously both ways and means. Prayer is the fruit of humility, and diligence an expression of earnestness. In a way of duty God will be found. A devout soul becomes more and more exalted, delicate, generous. *R.*

- 21 The wise in heart, *from their profitable conduct, shall soon be called and treated of their familiars as prudent †; and the sweetness of the lips in particular ‡, increaseth necessary learning.*

Prudence and learning. True wisdom influences thought, affection and behaviour, Luke viii. 15. Knowledge should be laid out for the best advantage of others. The feeling of great truths gives an eloquent manly utterance. Words of the gentle are gracious, 2 Tim. ii. 25.

Let all those means, *Almighty God*, which thou hast provided, for informing men concerning the truths of religion, and for making them truly religious, have the designed effect upon their hearts and lives; that by the prevalence of universal righteousness, goodness and truth, thou mayest be eminently glorified by those who bear the name of thy son!

- 22 Clear understanding is like a salubrious well-spring of happy life unto him that hath the sure possession of it; but the instruction of weak wicked fools is like folly itself, which leadeth to utter ruin.

Useful knowledge. The mind well stored overflows to

* Or, *shall have his blessings.* H. † *Rather but,* Gen. ii. 23. ‡ *Or giveth grace to wisdom.* H.

the refreshment of others with new light and heat. Place yourselves ever nigh to so great a blessing. Vain and frivolous, at best, must the conversation of others be. Like poisoned springs they often infect and ruin, from their steam. The weak never expose themselves so much, as upon high subjects.

We magnify thee, *our God*, by whom we are made sure, that it is thy glory to communicate thy perfections to thy creatures ; and to maintain the sovereignty of goodness, righteousness, and truth, for the benefit of the intellectual world !

The heart of the wise *man* teacheth his 23
mouth to *speak*, from agreeable experience ; and
addeth *the best of all learning among others* to
his *well ordered* lips.

Wise conversation. There is an eligible *manner*, as well as *season*, for every thing, Rom. xv. 1. Such strike out new ideas to themselves, Eph. iv. 29. Col. iv. 6. The curing of others ought to be managed with delicacy and tenderness. *R.* Exercise aids both knowledge and speech, Matth. xii. 34, &c.

Pleasant * words are *desirable* as drops from 24
an honey-comb ; sweet in themselves and
strengthening to the soul, even like health
of body to the very bones.

Words pleasant and useful. What flows with ease from a well improved heart is generally captivating. Here lies the whole secret of valuable eloquence. Virtue must be the foundation of good speaking. Fierce opposition serves for most part to irritate the young. *R.*

There is a way that *from love to vice* seem- 25
eth right unto a man ; but in the end thereof

* Or words of eloquence. *H.*

it is felt that they are the ways of certain irremediable death.

Carelessness and self-deceit. There is hope of one, as long as his conscience is not silenced by a mislaid judgment, Luke xi. 34. Psal. xix. 12. Ingenuous diligence and prayer, will succeed, Psal. xxv. 8, &c. Youth in general, are most hurt by the *jovialties* of vice, which are quite delusive. Errors of the human mind are nearly the same in all times. *R.*

Let not, *O thou good and holy God*, such a delusion ever take place in us, as to think there can be no inverting the order of nature to our prejudice; but that our reason might be employed, if we so resolve, to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

- 26 He that laboureth, laboureth for *what* himself cannot subsist without; for by the strength of appetite, his mouth continually craveth it of him.

Diligence. Need is the prompter of industry, along with the hope of success. Every idle person is inimical to his own person, and a nuisance to society, 2 Theff. iii. 10, &c. It is not charity to support such. Religious diligence is specially binding.

- 27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil *with incessant application*; and in his lips there is, for destroying, *what may be compared to a hot burning fire.*

Impious devices. They who have no fear of God, cannot be good! Malice seeks to triumph over pitiable human weakness. It is from the *intention* that our *omniscient witnesses* will judge, Jam. iii. 13.

- 28 A mischievous froward speaking man soweth strife, to wide extent; and a privy whisperer

to mutual disadvantage, separateth those who till then had lived as chief friends.

Frowardness and whispering. Some believe faults from a severe cruel disposition. Few wait the event of sober inquiry. A detractor undermines, and yet wishes to hide himself, Jam. iii. 17, &c. Artifice is unworthy of great souls. *R.*

A violent man enticeth his *simple* neighbour *to join*; and leadeth him, *under false pretexts*, in to the way that is not good, *for either private or public welfare.* 29

Violence. Confident assertions are ensnaring. The mouths of the multitude scruple not to add. Discovery of truth becomes fatal to such. Virtuous souls do not easily entertain distrust. *R.*

He *who is mischievous at heart* shutteth his eyes to devise *hurtful* * *froward* things; and moving his lips, in consequence of such artful measures †, he bringeth evil frequently to pass. 30

Malice. Deliberately intended mischief is horrible. They project means and mutter them frequently over, to render falsehood the more feasible. Success in vice is a sure evidence of *capacity*; and the forerunner of aggravated punishment.

The aged hoary head is *like a resplendent* crown of glory, if it be found in the ways of long approved righteousness. 31

Righteous old age. Appearance of advanced goodness is venerable, Lev. xix. 32. *Senators* have peculiar claims

* Compare Prov. xvi. 28.—vi. 14.—viii. 13. *H.*
† He putteth in execution the evil, or its evil. *H.*

from their naturally adorning garland, Psal. xcii. 12, &c.
Religious virtue ofteneſt attains to old age, Job v. 26.
Sound judgement is better than quick parts. *R.*

- 32 He that is flow to *act*, *under an impulse of anger*, is better *to himself*, than the mighty conquerors of others; and he that *calmly* ruleth his provoked spirit, than he that taketh a city, by artifice or storm.

Self-government. Age and understanding together, mellow the temper. It is desirable to be praised by competent judges. A patient equal disposition argues a noble mind. Good dispassionate men are images of *Almighty love*. To force subjection against truth and right, is shocking public robbery. It *destroys nature*, under pretence of *improving*. *R.*

Suffer not our spirits, O thou *compassionate Father* of them, to be in conjunction with, and subject unto any vicious, and accursed spirits, since we are redeemed by the blood of thy son; but take us into a conjunction with thy own good spirit, which is infinite and infallible; that we may live under the direction and influence of it all our days!

- 33 The lot is cast *for adventure* into the * lap; but the † whole disposing thereof, *though to appearance accidental*, is of the gracious infallible Lord.

Lots. Both great and small things are objects of *divine superintendence*. How comfortable! He disposes of what is most secret.

Grant, *Lord*, as thou repeatest thy mercies, so we may repeat the several duties of our religion; and thus advance nearer to thee, by that likeness, through which we are ever with thee, and by which alone we can draw nigh unto thee!

* *Or receiver.*

† *Or its decision.* *H.*

C H A P. XVII.

BETTER is a dry *scanty* morsel, for true **1**
enjoyment, and quietness therewith;
 than a house full of good *cheer**, like temple-sacrifices, with near *vexatious* strife.

Domestic peace. Quiet and holiness mark the children of the *highest*; and render society blissful. Pure social meats are sacrifices still of thanksgiving. Liberal and joyful spirits are congenial. Affluence often promises what it doth not confer. Want is not always miserable. Personal peace of mind renders others so. Noisy contentious feasts are burdensome. Peace is better than delicates. Invite not the peevish to table-fellowship.

A † wise *faithful* servant, when known, shall **2**
 have rule over a *spendthrift* ill-doing son, that causeth shame to his *nearest relatives*; and shall come in time to have part of the inheritance by purchase, among the brethren.

Faithful servants. Fidelity is proved by time and care. Neglect itself is unfaithful, Psal. ci. 6, 7. Eph. vi. 5. Man is not born for himself alone, but for society. R.

The ‡ fining-pot is for *purification* of silver, **3**
 and the hotter crucible furnace for *precious* gold; but the sovereign blessed and holy Lord § trieth the hearts of his best beloved people, for their good.

* At which friends were entertained, Exod. xxiv. 5. Deut. xviii. 3. H. † Or, a wise guardian controuleth an imprudent son; and divideth the inheritance among the brothers. H. ‡ Or melting cruse. H. § Proveth. H.

Afflictions sanctified. Man's knowledge reaches not the designs, principles and movements of the soul, Rom. xiv. 4. 1 Cor. iv. 3, &c. Afflictions, taken with patience, refine the very best, 1 Pet. i. 7, &c. Mal. iii. 3, &c. Jer. vi. 28. They may *distress*, but never can *overwhelm* the good.

- 4 A wicked doer giveth *easy* heed to false injuring lips; and a liar, *in particular*, giveth quick ear to a *base* naughty tongue like his own.

Evil doers and liars. A bad heart is the constant principle of cruel defamation. Such construct of others by what they feel. Their maxim is, the more mischief the better sport. Compare 1 Cor. xiii. 6. Psal. lii. 1, &c.

- 5 Whoso mocketh the poor, *on that account*, reproacheth his *all-wise* maker: and he that is glad at calamities *brought upon others*, shall not be long unpunished.

Poverty and affliction. It is the extreme of cruelty to increase wo, Eccl. iv. 3, &c. Afflictions try and sublimiate excellence. Misconstruct not divine judgements. To spare giving, the misfortunate are too often styled *vicious*. This is to add murder to the robbery of uncharitableness, Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. God espouses the cause of upright want, Prov. xxviii. 27.

Let the consideration of that great and terrible day of judgement abide, *O God*, upon our hearts continually; at which we shall awake out of the dust of death, and see the *Lord Jesus, God made manifest in the flesh*, come in flaming fire, to take vengeance on all those that know not *God*, and that obey not his *gospel*: and bestow glory, honour and immortality upon those that obey him!

- 6 Children's children are the *most frequent* ornamenting crown of *virtuous* old men; and

the glory of *such* children are their *wise useful* parents.

Parents and children. They who earliest honour *divine order*, do ofteneſt live in a long race of deſcendants, Pſal. cxxvii. 3, &c.—cxxxviii. 1, &c. Pious offspring riſe up to bleſs their infant, youthful protectors. How inſtimable and beneficial, to be thus deſcended? 2 Tim. i. 5. Keep up noble excellence, by cloſe imitation, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

Excellent ſpeech becometh * not a *weak* 7
wicked fool to meddle with; much leſs do lying
lips ſuit the character of a prince.

Eloquence, and lying. Vain perſons will ſometimes affect the praiſes of truth, to the diſtreſs of all who know them. Stations of truſt, and office, require the ſtricteſt attachment to what is fair and equitable. Falſehood is the moſt direct reverſe of divine nature and will, Pſal. v. 3, &c. Rev. xxi. 8, 27.—xxii. 15. Miniſters of religion are ſpecially bound to faithful ſpeech. An early riſing vanity, may one day obſcure great qualities.

A † gift from *pure grace* is *captivating*, as a 8
precious ſtone in the eyes of him that hath
the poſſeſſion of it; whitherſoever it turneth,
by any hand, it proſpereth with ſuitable praiſe.

Gifts. Bribes to the hurt of right are curſed abuſes of wealth. Gifts of grace are juſt the reverſe, Job xxxi. 7, &c. We always love with pleaſure.

He that ‡ covereth a *ſlight* tranſgreſſion, for 9

* Or the language of dignity becometh not, &c. H. Compare, Luke xxii. 25. † Or a bribe is like a beautiful gem in the eyes of him who loveth gifts; it procureth a man ſucceſs in whatſoever he attempteth, Prov. xxii. 24.—i. 19. H. ‡ Or concealeth an ill word, Prov. xi. 27.

peace sake, seeketh and procureth often the blessing of pure love among neighbours ; but he that basely repeateth a matter of that sort separateth very intimate former friends.

Love and hatred. Many escapes ought to be buried in silence, to reform the transgressors, and do good to society. Admonish secretly and with mildness. Catch not at every semblance of evil. Some that are real admit of extenuation. Discord is a dreadful element to live in, Psal. cxx. 5, &c. Col. iii. 12, &c.

May the consideration, how much we sinners are relieved against the rigour of the *law of God*, by the mediation of *Jesus Christ*, prevail with us, in obedience to thy divine authority, *O Lord*, and in gratitude for the divine compassion, to abate all rigour in those demands which we make upon our brethren, how much so ever they have offended us ; and as we hope to be forgiven, may we forgive !

- 10 *A judicious mild reproof entereth more deep into the profitable conviction of a wise candid man, than an hundred severe stripes into that of a fool.*

Reproof. Thought, ingenuity and teachableness are characteristics of prudent wisdom. Neither divine, or human stripes, will cure the obstinate, Prov. xxiii. 35. Truly wise people are jealous of their own hearts, and invite people to be free with them.

- 11 *An accustomed evil man, seeketh only hazardous rebellion ; therefore one time or another, * a cruel messenger shall be sent against him, for condign punishment.*

Discord. Habitual sin gradually hardens, and leads to seek after stupifying rebellious opinions. Men of

* *Or minister of vengeance.*

lively imaginations, are commonly the least solid, and most apt to create broils. *R.*

Let a *furious* bear robbed of her whelps 12
meet a *defenceless* man; rather than a fool in
the rage of his folly.

Rage. Revenge is base, and totally incompatible with religion. Losses are apt to increase wrath. How like to brutal savage fury is that of the ruffian? They have more instruments of cruelty, than boars. Overcome evil with good.

Who *so ungratefully* rewardeth the evil for good, 13
the punishment of evil shall not *long* depart out
from his house.

Ingratitude. To neglect, and maltreat a benefactor, is black, horrible guilt. Generations unborn may have cause to weep under it. Honour even small favours with thankful remembrance. Whoever is capable of forgetting a benefit may be looked upon as an enemy to society.

The beginning of strife *though small*, is *liable* 14
to gradual increase, as when one letteth out a
great weight of water; therefore * leave off
attending to the ground of contention, before it
be well meddled with.

Strife. A close guard is due to things of importance. Trivial escapes may prove fatal. Stop the flood gates of jealousy and passion, while you may, Jam. iii. 5, 8. A dying ember may be so blown upon, as to do a world of harm, Eccl. xxviii. 11, &c. Prov. xxvi. 20, 21. Be not ashamed to ask peace. *R.*

* *Some therefore meddle not with that which may bring on contention. H.*

- 15 He that justifieth the wicked *with his knowledge as innocent*; and he that, *from like baseness of mind*, condemneth the just *in his dealings*; even they both are an abomination to the Lord.

Righteousness and vice. Plead not for a bad cause; and far less set it eloquently off. To abuse the seat of judgment, for such purposes, would be peculiarly horrible, Exod. xxiii. 6, &c.

Teach us, *O Lord*, to consider how much of our time of life has been already consumed in the service of sin, and how little may remain for the necessary exercise of repentance, by which what was ill done, may be undone; and the contrary habits of righteousness, may be introduced and settled! Lest we be constrained at last to take part with thee against ourselves; and to condemn ourselves, without daring to ask, or hope, for that pardon, without which we must perish everlastingly.

- 16 Wherefore is there a price *put in the hand of a weak wicked fool, by opportunities, to get beneficial wisdom*, seeing he hath no *proper heart* * *to make use of it*?

Means and occasions How many sit ignorant under the best advantages for instruction? To want capacity and not to use it are nearly the same as to consequence, though not as to guilt, Psal. xxxii. 8, 9. Luke xii. 47.

- 17 A *sincere friend loveth at all times* †, and a brother-friend, is born *for special aid for the day of adversity*.

Friendship. Constancy and fortitude are the touchstone

* Or, *no disposition.* H † Some, *yea a brother will be be.* H.

of true love ; from knowledge, goodness and experience. Such will prudently allow for human frailties ; and grow in affection with trials. To conceal sentiments and afflictions is cruel to friendship.

A man void of understanding striketh 18
hands *in haste*, and *thus* becometh surety for
another, even in the presence of his judicious
friend, whom he might and ought to have con-
sulted.

Suretyship. To engage from love and friendship, the necessity and circumstances should be well thought of. It is unjust to do this for more than we are worth, and may sometimes prove cruel. In many cases, they do best, who become bound for another, without their knowledge, chap. vi. 1, &c.

He acts as one who loveth transgression, that 19
loveth to be engaged where strife is ; and he
that proudly * exalteth his gate, behaves as one
who seeketh sure miserable destruction.

Pride. Make peace with speed, ver. 14. Psal. xxxiv.
14. Pride and bad temper are near intimates, which
God resisteth.

He that hath a rash froward heart, leading 20
to false words, findeth no good from thence, but
much evil ; and he that hath a perverse shuf-
fling tongue falleth into sore mischief.

Froward heart and speech. Violence, immodesty and stubbornness, are sure marks of a froward heart. They wish to see things in their worst lights, and pay no regard to convictions, Psal. vii. 14, &c.

* Some, buildeth high his house. H.

- 21 He that † begetteth a *weak impious* fool doeth it to his *frequent* sorrow; and the father of *such* a fool hath no joy *at all* in him.

Wicked children. Vice is worse than simple weakness, ver. 25. Education neglected is hideous. Youthful lusts often lead to ruin, Hos. iv. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 11. Giving pain to parental tenderness is little short of parricide, Deut. xxi. 18, &c.

- 22 A merry heart, *from upright virtue*, doeth good to both *soul and body*, like a *refreshful* medicine; but a broken *dejected* spirit, *under horrors of guilt*, drieth the *very* bones.

Cheerfulness and dejection. Sweet and easy tempers have usually most health. It balances often a natural weak constitution and some degrees of want, Psal. xxxvii. 11, 16. Joyial heats are of no duration, and followed, for most part, with double uneasiness. Grief of repentance is not without what is quieting; whereas sorrow of this world worketh death. Solicitude defeats itself, Eccl. xxx. 24.

We acknowledge, *O Lord, most high*, that the obedience of our whole lives is due unto thee, our creator, and that every alienation of ourselves from thee is profane and sacrilegious. But having done acts of estrangement from, and hostility against thee, we confess, that we are viciously disposed thereby, and both unworthy of thy favour, and, remaining impenitent, incapable of it.

- 23 A wicked *injuring* man taketh a gift out of the bosom, to pervert *his ruler* from the ways of judgement.

Bribery. When the means of repairing wrongs are abused, the perversion is insufferable. He who bribes acknowledges the badness of his cause; and he who receives is impious, cruel, base. Such do set the wrong

† *Rather, hath begotten. H*

ed to sale, only because they have been hurt by them before. Happy isles where freedom and laws have their due course, Eccl. iv. 1, &c. Qualities in leaders are birth, intrepidity, temperance and experience. *R.*

The † rule of equitable wisdom is ever be- 24
fore him that hath understanding, *to execute*
the duties of his place ; but the eyes of the mind,
in a weak indifferent fool, are as in the ends of
the earth from true right.

Knowledge applied. A roving eye, with vaguing carriage, proclaims emptiness. What perfects the human faculties are the proper things to be known by a reasonable being. Mere speculations serve only to amuse, Jam. i. 21, &c. Phil. iv. 8. Corrupted minds can have no relish for heavenly truths. *R.* John. iii. 19, &c.

A foolish ill-behaving son is a severe † grief 25
to his father, and bitterness *itself* to her that
bare him.

Bad children. See ver. 21. Parents may grieve, and even be angry, in order to wise chastisement. A mother's pain is absolutely consuming. Ye next to boweless children think of these things.

Also to punish the just like malefactors is 26
not good *for either them or the public ; nor to*
strike princes for their laudable measures of
equity.

Rulers. Haste and passion do not excuse erroneous judges. High office abused portends ruin to a state, Psal. xii. 8. A civil war is the greatest of all calamities. Precipitate changes, however useful they may appear, are always dangerous. *R.*

* *In the countenance of a wise man, wisdom appeareth ;*
but the eyes of a fool roll to and fro. H. † Wrath.

- 27 He that hath *deep* knowledge spareth his words; and a man of *real* understanding is of an excellent *cool* spirit.

Tongue-government. The more people know, the more sensible they are of their ignorance. Fluency and much speech do not always characterize judgement. He affects least who knows most. Ostentation is hateful. Self-command argues calm thought, and eminent virtue, Jam. iii. 1, &c. The best causes are sometimes hurt by rashness. Be sparing in words, when circumstances speak sufficiently for themselves. *R.* The wise instruct by hints, rather than by long elaborate discussions. *R.*

- 28 Even a *simple ignorant* fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise, by *those who* are *strangers to him*; and he that shutteth close his lips, for the sake of bearing others, is esteemed a man of understanding.

Speech and silence. A conviction of weakness is one good step to become wiser. Modesty conciliates and endears. Pride is unteachable. Most infants blush to speak, and should not be taught forwardness. To govern speech is mercy to ourselves, and justice to the world.



C H A P. XVIII.

- 1 **T**HROUGH * *an earnest* desire after knowledge, a man having separated

* *A retired man pursueth the researches he delighteth in; and hath pleasure in each branch of science. H.*

himself from the busy world seeketh with diligence, and in process of time, intermeddleth with all profitable wisdom.

Solitude and meditation. Understanding leads the soul, Matth. vi. 22, &c. Earnest desire and diligence flows from affection. Success is the reward. The mind of man sees but a small number of ideas, and should review them. *R.* Agreeable sequestered places sooth the soul to sweet spiritual musings. *R.* Prize a life of peace and tranquillity. *R.*

A † vain fool hath no delight in understanding great subjects, but that the depth of his heart may discover itself. 2

True knowledge. To speak and to be spoken of is a proud man's object, not to become good. The tender passions lose their force, and their delicacy, when they become diffuse. *R.*

When the wicked cometh to be fully known, 3
then cometh also just contempt, and with
that general ignominy reproach.

Contempt and reproach. Evil habits lead to hardening, Matth. vii. 6. Psal. i. 1, &c.

The enriching words of a good man's mouth, 4
are inexhaustible as deep waters; and the large
well-spring of wisdom issues forth pleasantly, as
a † pure flowing brook.

Good conversation. A wise holy man ceases not to improve both mind and heart. He grudges no seasonable aids to others, and thereby quickens thought, ch. x. 11.

† A fool delighteth not in knowledge; but in the displaying
of his own thoughts. *H.* † Or fountain stream. *H.*

- 5 It is not good, *but rather hideous*, to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow *by this means*, the *undoubted* righteous even in *solemn* judgement.

Criminal partiality. Bad governors are worse than none. Guilt easiest screened is more hateful, Lev. xix. 15.

- 6 A *proud* fool's lips enter into *violent* contention, and his mouth, *as it were*, calleth loud for *vengeful* strokes.

Contention. They who blow the coal of mischief are sure to suffer. Indiscreet speech issues often in extensive cruel disputes, ch. vi. 2.—xiii. 3.

- 7 A fool's mouth is his *sure* destruction *at last*, and his *false* injuring lips are *as* the snare of his *own* soul.

Speaking evil. See reflections ver 6. The sight of eminent virtue overwhelms with reproaches, even when they seem to triumph. R.

- 8 The words of a *whispering* tale-bearer are, *by their apparent kindness*, as *deep* killing wounds, and they go down, *through time*, into the innermost *vital* parts of the belly.

Whispering. Smooth cuts, given with art, are of all others the worst. Some affect to mean no harm, some to serve religion, and all to be averse.

- 9 He also that is slothful in his work *is not fit to prosper*, and soon it will be seen, *that he is*

brother-transgressor to him that is a great riotous * walter.

Idleness and poverty. Man is intended for labour. The noblest blessings of our earth are inward peace and reputation. People are unjust to society, who do not work. The idle and intemperate seek immediate pleasure, which issues in various miserable guilt, ch. xxiii. 23, &c.

The gracious powerful name of the Lord is 10
a strong tower; the righteous runneth from
evils of every kind into it and is kept safe.

Trust in God. Every divine attribute is a defence to the pious, or effectual support, 2 Cor. xii. 6, &c. Godly fortitude will conquer the most violent oppositions. R. Leave to omnipotence the care of accomplishing his own decrees, without prescribing the means. R. He doth not abandon the sorrowful. R.

We bless thee, O our Creator and Governor, that in all cases, even the most afflicted, we can approach thee with good hope of finding favour and help, seasonable and proportionable to our needs.

The impious rich man's wealth is his chosen 11
strong city to abide in, and as an high wall in
his own conceit, superior to all opposition.

Riches abused. Religious confidence appears as folly, to ungodly pride, Job xxxi. 24, 25. Wealth ruins more than it supports, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. Every wicked accession is a new plague and provocation, 1 Tim. vi. 17. Psal. iv. 9.

Before destruction the heart of man by his 12
looks is often observed to be haughty, and before
honour is the captivating grace of humility.

* Or robber. H.

Humility and pride. A haughty man makes many enemies and disoblige friends. Prosperity is apt to inflate, Prov. xxix. 23. 1 Pet. v. 5.

We make our application to thee, who art *glorious in holiness*, and engage ourselves in the work of our recovery, as strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

- 13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it *fully out*, it is *in the end* folly contemptible and certain long shame unto him.

Rash judging. No one can do justice without fairly weighing all that can be said. Shame is a natural consequence of disgrace. Answers ought to suit the plain meaning and purpose of what was asked. They must mistake who hear only in part. Such company is unsafe at times, and always unpleasant.

- 14 The *pious patient* spirit of a man will sustain his *animal* infirmity; but a *conscious* wounded spirit *from guilt*, who can bear?

Patience and despair. Piety, faith, fortitude, grow by affliction, Jam. i. 3, &c. Rom. v. 3, &c. Wise principles are powerful; whereas superstition weakens and debases. Virtue regulates the passions, but does not extinguish tender sentiment.

We confess, *Lord*, that the terror of a guilty mind makes it difficult to believe our reconciliation with an offended *God*; but by the death of *Christ*, there is a full vindication of the divine law and maintenance of everlasting righteousness. Hence, the most sacred obligation is laid upon us, and the most gracious promises confirmed to us.

- 15 The heart of the *foreseeing* prudent getteth knowledge of *present precarious outward enjoyment*; and the ear of the wise seeketh *such* knowledge *with solicitude*.

Prudence. If we are not aware of what may give pain and disappointment; they come with much force. It is prudent to guard equally against despair, and what may happen. Proportion earnestness to what is valuable, and use fit means. Practice establishes habit and disposition; settles a constitution and temper: a good heart, and a good life.

A man's gift maketh *frequent open room* 16
for him; and bringeth him before great
men.

Gifts. Base souls prefer self-interest to that of the public. Psal. lxxii. 2, &c. 12, &c. Merit ought ever to supply vacant offices, Psal. xii. 8. When counsels change often, the powers of faction and money are greatly to be dreaded. Few national judgements can be more awful, Isa. xi. 2, &c. Gifts, as marks of mutual affection, are valuable.

He that is first *heard* in his own cause seem- 17
eth just; but his *more righteous* neighbour
cometh *afterwards* and searcheth him out to
disgrace.

Judgement impartial. Parties must be called and attended to before an equal sentence. The best are in danger from selfish stretches. Suspect no more than can be clearly proved. The law itself is judged, condemned, when people do otherways.

Casting of the lot at times causeth conten- 18
tions to cease; and parteth *for ever* between
the mighty *disputants*.

Lots. Some cases are replete with unfurmountable difficulties. Appeals therefore must be made to *heaven*. Previous to this, every proper human mean should be tried. The will of *God* made manifest ought to silence all controversy, Acts i. 24. To risk a great stake, with-

out necessity, is most criminal; and cause of melancholy disputes. Hazard games may be borne with, as an amusement; but become intolerable, as a business. Think if you can lose without impatience, or doing wrong to others, Prov. xiv. 22.

- 19 A brother *by blood* offended is *often* harder to be won, than a strong *fortified* city; and their *mutual* contentions are like *shutting* the *iron* bars of a castle *upon each other*.

Offences and contentions. The utmost prudence is needful where near relatives are parties. Delicate ties once broken render subsequent union next to hopeless. Tremble to offend of a sudden, and against numerous endearing offices. Cast out envy and pride. Fear rudeness, under pretence of being familiar. It is by reason alone, that man should subdue man. R. A threefold cord broken is not easily joined again, Num. xx. 20.

- 20 *The hunger* of a man's belly shall be satisfied in many cases, with the good fruit of his *wise speaking* mouth; and with the *future* increase of his *useful* lips shall he be quite filled.

Conversation useful. We should stand in awe of what the *spirit of God* has laid so great stress upon, Jam. i. 26. Psal. xxxix. 1. Thoughtlessness and passion are inimical to right words, Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c. Conscience and the joy of spreading useful knowledge are chief spiritual advantages.

- 21 Not *unfeldom* death and life *themselves* are in the power of the tongue; and they that love to * *direct* it shall eat the good fruit thereof.

Tongue-government. The greatest number of people

* *Some indulge. H.*

undo themselves, by weak or evil speech. There is no recalling what we once utter. Speech is the feat of persuasion, and ought only to be applied for beneficial matters. What a burden upon neighbourhood are malicious evil-speakers? How great their danger? Matth. xii. 35, &c. Jam. iii. 5, &c.

Whofo findeth a *true* wife, findeth a good 22
thing *above most others* ; and obtaineth *signal*
favour of the *sovereign* Lord.

Wives. Only a meet help merits the name of a wife. Weak and evil choices, from motives of this world, turn out often and justly to be vexatious. Neither husbands nor wives become perfect all at once ; and parties should expect this. Sweet temper and prudent love alleviate mutual cares, chap. xxxi. 11, &c. Seek accomplishments of mind and heart, rather than even good looks.

The *modest* poor, *taught by his circumstances*, 23
useth *soft conciliating* intreaties, but the rich,
proud of his wealth, answereth *the best* roughly.

Wealth and poverty. Large outward fortune seldom separates from pride. A low state is intended by heaven to humble, and is preferable to the abuse of wealth. Rough answers are an insult, Jam. ii. 5, 8.

A man that hath *real* friends must shew 24
himself friendly, by *kind offices* ; and there is
a friend *of this sort* that sticketh closer *in bene-*
ficient affection, than a *blood-brother*.

Friendship. The sacred tie requires both nice care and constancy. *Reserve* is wounding, but to *distrust* is killing. To outdo by mutual kind acts is becoming strife. Every new favour justifies former ones. Religious virtue is wise and stable. Whoever looks for a friend without imperfections will never find what he seeks. R. We

steps of vice seem to be only innocent amusements; compliance with received customs, and a liberty which may be allowed in order to please. *R.*

So carry us, *O Lord*, through this vain and transitory world, this sinful and tempting state, that we, preserving ourselves from all pollutions of the flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in thy fear, may be fitted for the fullest manifestations and communications of thee, who fillest all hearts with raptures of gladness and joy, as far as they are capable to receive from thee, the boundless ocean of felicity and glory?

The *rash criminal* foolishness of a man per- 3
verteth his way * of acting; and when he suf-
fers from thence, his heart *impiously* fretteth
against the Lord.

Impious rashness. Want of sincere love to goodness is the most frequent cause of practical mistakes. Inattention from pride ruins vast multitudes. Even the natural punishments of vice are not patiently taken. They would have *God* and his righteous establishments to suffer, on their account.

We would remember with all gratitude and joy, *O Lord*, that all evil is contrary and inferior to thee, whose goodness and sovereignty are transcendent; and by this the happiness and life of the intellectual world are secured, since thou wilt not suffer any such evil to prevail against thy servants.

Wealth too often maketh many professing 4
friends; but the *humble destitute* poor is con-
temptuously † separated from his next door
neighbour.

Rich and poor. Wealth gives power and influence; which is right, when properly laid out. But to flatter

* *His affairs, designs, purposes.* *H.* † *Or, deserted*
by. H.

and cajole the wicked rich is abominable. Much solicitude is due from the wealthy to manage. Rom. xii. 16. Jam. ii. 1, &c.

- 5 A false witness of any kind shall not be punished for a long space, and he that speaketh lies upon solemn oath, above every other, shall not escape the vengeance of heaven.

False witnessing. Equivocal dubious terms, when giving evidence, is real false witness bearing; an affront to omniscience, that defies justice. Zech. v. 1, &c. Mal. iii. 5, &c. Acts of fraud and violence do often issue in perjury, Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

- 6 Many, for base ends, will sycophantishly entreat the favour of the reigning prince, be his character ever so bad; and every man almost is a friend in appearance to him that giveth frequent gifts.

Selfishness, and gifts. Be not estranged from a poor virtuous man. Affections may be known from peoples looks. Even a king's favour should not be purchased by a crime. R. Sincere benevolence would do good without hope of recompence. R.

- 7 It sometimes happens, that all the brethren of the poor, who have been brought up together, do so hate, as to shun him only for his want; how much more do his later professing friends go far away from him, when need is greatest? He who is destitute pursueth both of them with earnest petitioning words, yet they are cruelly wanting in supplies to him.

Poverty neglected. Nature and faith require us to bear one another's burdens. Former good circumstances are

too soon forgotten, along with past favours. To stand aloof from certain honest misfortune, is practical hatred, Psal. xli. 1, &c. 1 John iii. 15. The remembrance of former easy situation, adds to suffering want, Job. vi. 14, 15.

He that *once getteth useful wisdom, by proper means, loveth the happiness of his own soul; and he that keepeth understanding in exercise shall find certain everlasting good.* 8

Profitable knowledge. The mind is incapable of equal application to two opposite interests, 1 John ii. 15, 16. Right principles, with pious charitable dispositions, constitute the life of the soul; and are put into the power of all. Happiness, from thence, is rationally progressive constant.

A false witness *of any kind shall not be unpunished for a long space; and he that speaketh lies upon solemn oath shall inevitably perish.* 9

False witnessing. See ver. 5. Truth ought to be sacred in every transaction; being the ground-work of justice and union. From swearing and lies, in common conversation, the progress to what is false in judgement becometh easy. Check the first movements to dissembling in children, Prov. xix. 5.

The show of great delight is not seemly for either a weak or wicked fool; much less for a servant of low rank, with incapacity to have rule over reigning princes.* 10

Ostentatious pleasure. Animal gratifications in their height, disgrace reason. The body was made to be subject; the mind to govern. It is both unpleasant and

* Or of elegance and dignity. H.

hurtful, when people of little understanding are advanced to authority, Psal. xii. 8. Prov. xxx. 21.

- 11 The discretion of a man deferreth his *resentments* in anger ; and *even when he finds just cause for displeasure*, it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

Discretion in anger. Virtuous sensibility feels wrong, yet thinks either how to excuse or alleviate : True human greatness. Quick revenge is followed with shame ; and other sad effects, Luke xviii. 19. Prov. xvi. 32.

- 12 The king's wrath is *tremendous* as the roaring of a *hungry lion* ; but *the effect of his favour is sweetly beneficial*, as *the even-dew* upon the *heated grass*.

A king's favour and wrath. It is a chief duty, neither to give nor take offence, if possible, Eccl. viii. 4. Avoid disputable points. Provoke not clear commanding right, chap. xx. 2. Prosperity yields a freshening look, 2 Pet. ii. 12, &c. The most excellent laws are useless, without stable execution. R.

- 13 A *wicked foolish son* is the *severe calamity* of his *pious father* ; and the *clamorous contentions* of a wife are *like a continual dropping of water through the roof*.

A bad wife and children. Family peace founded on religion is a chief source of enjoyment, and excitement to gratitude. Few trials are more difficult to bear, than what opposes this. The worst of people do feel it. Easy joyous looks ought to reward labouring for family bread. Continual dropping leads to wish a change from what no outward advantage can remedy. How much the reverse of Christian love ? 1 Tim. ii. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 4, 7.

Grandeur of house and riches are the frequent inheritance of fathers; and a skilful prudent assisting wife is a still higher favour from the Lord. 14

Female prudence. Some favours we owe to heaven most directly. In the choice of a meet help, this should be thought of. Virtues of a single life promise well, and claim an attentive regard. Bodily properties do not always clothe a reasonable mind. It is pious to suppose that *God* directs, when he is acknowledged.

A habit of slothfulness, through time, casteth into a kind of deep sleep; and such an idle soul shall suffer extreme hunger. 15

Sloth. Indolence sees and wishes but will not work. Where no opposition doth shew itself, it can go the length of resolving; which for most part continues till an alarm is sounded, out of time. The greater that concerns are, the greater danger there is.

He that keepeth the divine commandment with due care, keepeth the peace of his own soul; but he that despiseth the right government of his ways shall die, under reproach and misery. 16

Obedience to God. In no period must the rule of life be neglected. Self-examination and knowledge are chief securities. In momentous cases to be careless is to despise. By describing the effects of vice, man is brought to know himself; the heart is touched, while the mind is delighted. *R.*

Holy Father, as we have the standard of true religion in the gospel of *Jesus Christ*, who is our *Lord* and *king*; so let us, who are Christians, consider thee, *our God*, as manifested by him, in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily!

- 17 He that hath *beneficent* pity upon the *upright* poor lendeth unto the Lord, *who made them so*; and that which he hath given, *from generous motives*, will he *amply* pay him again.

Beneficence. Compassion is the source of good charitable deeds. Motives from this world may lead to alms, which God will not reward, 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3. Search out the afflicted, 2 Cor. ix. 9. The pleasure of doing good, for its own sake, is unspeakable. R. Objects of sorrow should be observed with respectful silence! R.

Relieve, *O gracious Lord*, and succour all that are in necessity and distress; and be a suitable help in their needful time of trouble! Support them by thy strength, refresh them with thy consolation, exercise them unto their profit, and prepare them for whatsoever is thy will concerning them!

- 18 Chasten thy *offending* son, while there is hope of *his amendment*; * and let not thy *too indulgent* soul spare for his crying to *desist*.

Parental correction. To punish corporeally should be a parent's last resource. When needed it is merciful severity. At the same time very moving, Prov. xv. 10. Heb. xii. 5, &c.

- 19 A † man of great wrath shall suffer punishment *on account of his violence in haste*; for if, *to prevent this*, thou deliver him *once*, yet thou must do it again, *or leave him in the hands of his foes*.

Wrath. The divine commands are truly parental.

* Some, but do it not in wrath, lest thou slay him, Lev. xx. 4. Exod. iv. 24. H. † Or, let a man of great wrath suffer. H.

Even those who seem to be religious do not often govern their temper, Eph. vi. 4. Wrath loses its own end at the time, becomes an object of general scorn, and severe revenge, Prov. xxix. 22.—xiv. 17, 29. Begin amendment early. Grace and ill neighbours do not dwell together.

Hear *early good counsel*, and receive * in- 20
struction for *right conduct*; that thou mayest
be found wise, as to *happiness*, in thy latter end.

Good counsel. The more danger there is from disobedience, the more attention is due to fair warning. To forgive is noble, and still more to overcome evil with good, Jam. iii. 17. Be ever open to argument, and glad to have faults made known, Psal. xc. 12. An inward calm resembles the repose of *God*, whose infinite actions do not diminish his perfect tranquillity.

There are many devices in a man's heart, 21
to *evade obligation*; nevertheless the counsel
of the Lord, for *duty and happiness*, that shall
stand *immoveable*.

Self-deceit. Events are of divine permission, or of immediate appointment. How easy is it with him to confound the wisest apparent measures? Prov. xvi. 1, 9. Our best prudence is to acknowledge the *Almighty*. The conduct of *God* only offends us, because we are finite and mortal; judging only from small pieces. *R.*

We confess it, O thou *great and blessed God*, to be the privilege and exaltation of our nature, that we are made for employment about thee; that we can imitate the virtue of thee, whose name is exalted above all blessing and praise, above all acknowledgement and admiration!

The † desire of a man is to obtain his neigh- 22

* Some, *correction*. *H.* † Or the glory of a man is his *beneficence*. *H.*

bour's kindness ; and a poor unable man, from upright compassion, is better than a mere promising liar.

Kindness. To give is natural to sympathy, and god-like ; refines the understanding ; exercises our best affections ; and gives freedom and opportunity to inquire for the afflicted. Bountifulness is the highest luxury. Some are made up of promises, and only disappoint, adding to woes, Jam. ii. 15, 16.

- 23 The fear of the Lord, *which leads to cheerful obedience*, tendeth to the *happiness of life* ; and he that hath it *in possession* shall abide satisfied : he shall not be visited with *overwhelming evil*.

Fear of God, and true happiness. Solemn regular acts of piety maintain filial reverence, Eccl. xii. 13. The bliss of contentment is superior to every other, Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c. Criminal solicitude is often worse than actual suffering. Eternal life is a balance to the greatest natural evils. The truths of *God* have a great power over the minds of men ; and whilst we recount these in worship, we are moved to divine resemblances !

Cause us, *O God*, to adhere steadfastly unto our religion, with rational approbation of every part of it ; that keeping thy equitable gracious commands, we may have the high reward naturally consequent thereupon ; and at last obtain eternal life, the final consummation, and glorious recompence thereof, which is the life of our lives !

- 24 A slothful man *grows so alarmingly in his disorder, that he* * *hideth his hand from labour and cold*, in his bosom, and will not, *without*

* Or droppeth his hand below his plate, 2 Kings xxi. 13. 2 Chron. xxxv. 13. Arab. H.

reluctance, so much as bring it *forth* to his mouth again.

Sloth. Indolence is progressive, and fruitful of miseries. As long as demands of hunger will shift off, it cannot be effectually roused. Even wise methods of bestowing charity, some of them disdain.

Smite a *foolish* scorner, and *even* the simple 25
will beware of *imitating them*; and reprove
with mildness one that hath *some good under-*
standing, and he will *come more extensively* to
understand *useful knowledge*.

Correction and reproof. Different kinds and measures of vice require different treatment, Jude xxii. 23. Malicious obstinacy in sin wishes and endeavours to propagate it among the ignorant. Irreligious ridicule is not to be borne. One chief end of discipline is to warn others. Be mild, while there is hope from thence, Psa. cxli. 4, &c. Prov. xxviii. 23.—xxiv. 25.

Bring us at last, *O Lord*, to the blessed society of saints and angels; and fit us to meet *our Lord*, when he shall descend from heaven, at the time of the restitution of all things; and make us capable of that pardon, which he shall bestow upon those who have been renewed by repentance, and reconciled to righteousness, and to him.

He that wasteth *the substance* of his father, 26
and * chaseth away his *affectionately remonstrat-*
ing mother, is a son that causeth *instant* shame,
and bringeth on *both more general and lasting*
reproach.

Prodigality and disobedience to parents. The worst kind of parricide is that which eats a father's bread, and drinks his tears. Supreme justice is the only adequate

* Or thereby driveth out his mother. H.

avenger of such. Who can think of being haunted day and night by this tremendous ghost? As young people hope for *God's* blessing, they should seek that of their parents.

- 27 Cease, my dear son, upon the earliest notice, to hear *with composure* the pretended instruction that causeth to err, from obedience to the words of *sound* knowledge.

Seducers. There is a gradation in vice, (Psal. i. 1, 2.) though next to imperceptible. Wicked example, and solicitation, ought instantly to be fled from, 2 Pet. iii. 17, 18. Beware of wit and pleasantries from such. The whole system of infidelity is erring from knowledge. Think of the sentiments which can meet death.

Grant us time, *O Lord*, for our amendment; and may all the events of providence, and circumstances of our lives further us herein; that before we die we may be fit to live for ever in that place, where the perfection of holiness and righteousness has a sovereignty in all hearts; and where all the exercises of men shall be an uninterrupted employment of their faculties about thee, *our God*, perpetual imitations of thee, and giving glory for ever to thee, who art the *first cause*, and the *chiefest good*: the original of our beings, and centre of our rest!

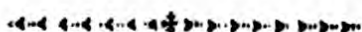
- 28 An ungodly witness scorneth *both divine and human* judgement; and the mouth of the *flagitious* wicked, by that means, devoureth for a time large wages of iniquity.

False witnessing. One who deliberately perjures must be to the highest measure abandoned. He defies *God*, and setteth aside all justice. At how mean a rate do they set their souls to sale? Zech. v. 1, &c. Mal. iii. 5.

- 29 Judgements of dreadful nature are prepared for *impious* scorers, and stripes without

number for the back of careless fools, whom they carry along with them.

Impious scoffing. Prosperous vice is too apt to flatter itself; and thereby become more inexcusable, Rom. ii. 1, &c. Psal. l. 19, &c. A good father will never make use of punishments, when he can gain his children by mildness. *R.* Not only justice, but goodness, requires to punish the guilty. *R.*



CHAP. XX.

WINE, *when addicted to *, is like a mocker of noble faculties; strong drink of any kind is what leads to violent raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby, with the specious language of drunkards, is not at all wise.*

Drunkennes. The creatures of *God* are good, and to be gratefully used, for the benefit of soul, as well as body. Excess is ever hurtful. The sight of a drunkard affords moderating instruction. Caution and prudence cease with undue quantity, Jam. iv. 1, &c. Even the warmth of sociality may sometimes deceive, Chron. xxiii. 29, &c. **They** who have least reason to spare are the most apt to part with it.

The *just* fear of a *displeased* king is *tremendous* as the roaring of a *fierce* lion let loose : **who**so thus provoketh him to anger sinneth much against the peace and happiness of his own soul.

* Compare Prov. xxiv. 9.—ix. 18.—xv. 12. H.

Wrath of kings. Equitable rulers are a terror only to evil works. Despotism is horrible. It is injudicious to contend, where there is no hope of success. Rage, armed with force, is like the sea in uproar.

- 3 It is an honour for a man to cease from strife as much as possible, and still more from fomenting and perpetuating it; but every weak wicked fool will be officiously meddling with what doth keep these up.

Strife. The best at times are too apt to take offence, and even to exceed in wrath. Watchfulness and resolution, therefore, are essential to genuine excellence. Be not officious in other people's business. Beware of false honour, and taking to a party.

- 4 The sluggard will not plough in proper time, by reason of the famishing winter cold; therefore shall he be forced to beg even in harvest, and have * next to nothing when others live at ease.

Sloth. Opportunity lost is often irreparable. Indolence, though detestable, wants not some excuse or other. Self-pleasing is at the bottom of all. Few do pity them. Begin life with diligence, so as to acquire a habit.

- 5 Counsel † in the heart of a judicious man is hid out of common view, like the bottom of deep water: but a man of similar good understanding will be able to ‡ draw it out.

Deep counsels. Human nature ought to be well studied. Those who live in public stations are most con-

* Or obtain. H. † Or design. ‡ Rather draw it up. H.

earned. It is pleasant to see the traces of truth in all nations.

We bless thee, *most gracious God*, for the excellency of that reasonable nature thou hast invested us men with; and that by our distinguishing faculties, we are but a little lower than the angels, having dominion over the other works of thy hands, in this visible world.

Most men will proclaim *aloud* every one 6
his own *bounteous* goodness; but a *sincere*
faithful giving man who can *soon* find?

True generosity. To give is endearing, and yet ought not to be boasted of. Trust not large speakers upon beneficence. Modest and cheerful almonizers encourage the necessitous to ask. A bountiful heart is pleased with occasions to assist. What a treasure is such an one? What a fruitful spring of good? Few vices disgrace humanity more than ingratitude, Luke xvii. 17.

The just *charitable* man walketh *close* in his 7
integrity *through life*; his children *by that*
very means often are blessed *with an agreeable*
competency after him.

Upright beneficence. An illimited justice comprehends the whole of duty; and must be the fruit of principle. Integrity is proof against temptation, and renews strength with its own experienced weaknesses. To a right sense of things, charitable justice is the highest of all luxury; and is for most part rewarded even in time. Domestic ease is seldom, if ever, hurt by it. Examples make a deeper impression than reasoning. R.

A *patriot* king, that sitteth in the *chief* throne 8
of judgement, scattereth away all *known* evil,
with his *firm impartial* eyes.

King and government. The end of rule is to preserve property and good order; which requires superiors to

be watchful, intelligent, generous. A king is answerable for subordinated governors. Fidelity and not rank is the glory of office. Presence and look of high worth is terrible to the wicked. Subjects who experience good ought to be grateful. It is mad presumption to give out mere will for a law. *R.* Princes should be accustomed, as an essential part of their religion, to hear daily the strongest and the most salutary truths. *R.*

- 9 Who can say, *with conscious truth*, I have made my heart *perfectly* clean, I am pure *even* from my *favourite* sin?

Perfection unattainable. In proportion to the greatness and weight of people's obligations is the danger of their falling short. Those who are the most humble and useful take the widest views of duty, Jam. iv. 17. Sanctification of the heart is indispensable, Jam. i. 14, 15. Prov. iv. 23. Sinful thoughts surprise the best. Watch unto prayer. Be humble. Feel the need of mercy; that is, of *gospel* grace.

- 10 Divers *false* weights, and divers *false* measures, *one to purchase, and another to sell out with*, both of them are alike abomination to the *sovereign equitable* Lord.

Trading justly. Appearances of piety render known immoralities along with them quite shocking. Take not advantage of the young and simple. The world was not made for one person. Dread divine more than human vengeance. The reverse of *God's* nature and will, he must hate, as he loves himself, Ezek. xxxiii. 14, 15. Psal. l. 16, &c.

- 11 Even a child, *above mere non-age*, is known by *the prevalence* of his doings, whether his work be *the effect* of pure innocent disposition, and whether it be *like to issue in what will afterwards prove right to him*.

Dispositions natural. What people love, or hate most, is soon determined by their tenor of acting; especially when keen as well as frequent. Some probable judgements from thence may be made of the earliest appearances among equals, Prov. xxii. 6.

The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them, *to be fitly used while young, and ever after.* 12

Bodily members. Each part of the human frame is adjusted with great beneficial wisdom, and ought to be acknowledged with warm pious gratitude, Jam. i. 17. Depend upon heaven in a way of diligence, for improving all good gifts. The knowledge of *God* and ourselves, should be the chief aim of all our researches. *R.* We need only our own existence to be convinced of *God's*. *R.*

Thou art worthy, *O Lord*, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure, they are, and were created! Thou art the first cause, and the last end.

Love not *unnecessary* sleep, lest thou *should* come to *abject* poverty; open thine eyes, *for setting about work*, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread. 13

Industry and sloth. Think, contrive, execute and persevere. Contentment is essential to happiness, Psal. xxxvii. 4, &c. Greed and disgraceful indolence are often united.

It is naught, it is naught, saith the *selfish* *deceiving* buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth *of a great bargain.* 14

Fair traffic. The neglect of lawful means is a strong temptation to what is injurious. Over-reaching business is detestable. Numbers and frequency do not lessen this, 1 Thess. iv. 6. Why wish to shock the ingenuous

seller? Blush for justice and religion when the simple are deliberately hurt, Psal. v. 4, &c. Mutual accommodation by trade is a great privilege.

- 15 There is *much desire after* gold, and a multitude of *bright shining* rubies; but the lips of *him who has found useful* knowledge are a *much more precious ornamenting* jewel *than them all together*.

Useful and seasonable words. Every kind of knowledge is good, which conduces to the advantage of private and social life. Diligence demonstrates estimation put upon it. No jewel is to be compared with that of a good conscience, the favour of *God*, and the hope of eternal life.

We acknowledge, *O Lord*, that we find ourselves unsatisfied after all the use and enjoyment of the things of this world, which prove no better to us than vanity and vexation of spirit. We have desires of good greater than these worldly things can satisfy; and we have capacities of good, greater than these worldly things can fill. We are still destitute and craving, who will shew us any good? How large so ever our portion, and how free soever our indulgence is, as to sensible entertainments.

- 16 *It would be proper, were such a thing lawful, to take * his most necessary* garment, that is surety for a mere stranger, *to recover your own again; and take a much higher pledge of him who so engages for a strange immodest woman.*

Suretyship. Great risks ought only to be run for approved good people, Matth. v. 42.

- 17 Bread of *wilful* deceit is *sweet at the time of*

* *Present for the future.*

acquisition, to a base injuring man ; but afterwards his mouth shall feel from shame and grief, as though it were to be filled with vexatious gravel.

Fraud. The proper use of riches is to obtain by them what nature stands in need of. Imagination enlarges want beyond bounds, and leads to unlawful shifts. When passion subsides the pestive nature of vice is felt. Trouble enhances this, like a morsel of stones inseparable from the teeth and gums. It neither can be swallowed, nor spit out ; but ever seems to say, restore or be damned.

Every purpose *whatever* is *best* established 18
by *judicious* counsel ; and *above all other*, with
political good advice make and conduct even
necessary war.

Counsel. Strictly examine designs by conscience and scripture. Pious experienced friends are inestimable. Disappointments are soothed by having done our best. *Policy* is often more requisite than *strength*. Discernment with courage mark genuine prudence.

He that goeth about as a tale-bearer of *what* 19
he may have had in confidence, revealeth *those*
secrets to the hurt of many ; therefore meddle
not with him *as an intimate* that *thus* flatter-
eth with his *unjust cruel* lips.

Flattering whisperer. A tale-bearer affects endearing regards wherever he goes, and is a complication of villainies, Jer. ix. 3, &c. They who betray others, want only time and opportunity, to do the same with thee.

Whofo *either in word, or in deed*, curseth his 20
father or his mother, his lamp, *shining at the*

time ever so bright, shall at length be put out in thickest obscure darkness.

Parents abused. The highest degree of unnaturality is to annoy the instruments of life, and infant tuition. All advances towards killing, may be understood as an abandoned curse, Exod. xxi. 17. Deut. xxi. 18, &c. Their very name is a blot upon human kind.

- 21 An inheritance may be gotten hastily by evil means, at the beginning of life ; but the end thereof shall not be blessed with true, or long enjoyment.

Covetousness. To acquire honestly and lay out with reason are essential requisites to prudence, religion and happiness. Uprightly obtained possessions, though sudden, may be both pleasantly and profitably enjoyed, 1 Tim. vi. 9, &c. A divine curse lurks in sinful purchases and must consume them, Job xv. 29, &c. Hab. ii. 6. Amos viii. 4, &c.

- 22 Say not thou inwardly, I will recompence in wrath the evil which has been done ; but rather wait with patience on the all-wise, omnipotent Lord, in the use of proper conciliating means, and he shall save thee from greater injury.

Trust in God. He is guilty of revenge who broods angrily over mischief. To retaliate, as private persons, would be to witness and judge in one's own cause, Rom. xii. 19, &c. Lev. xix. 18. Redress may be meekly sought from rulers, Rom. xiii. 1, &c.

Make us sensible, O thou most high, of the power thou hast given us over ourselves, for the government of our affections and actions ; and strengthen our spirits against all foreign impressions and violence, by the consideration of our dependence upon thee, and of thy all-sufficiency for us, and sovereignty over all things : that we may, in

the worst outward condition, be satisfied in thee, and possess our souls in patience.

Divers *false weights, to buy and sell out with,* 23
are an abomination unto the *supreme equitable*
Lord; and a false *deceitful balance* is not
good *neither*.

Falsehood in trade. From the greatness of wise people's concern to avoid certain evils, we may judge of their malignity, ver. 10. chap. xi. 1. The number of offenders will but enhance punishment, Prov. xviii. 5.—xvii. 26.

Man's *various goings* are *appointed* of the 24
Lord; how can a man then, *unless he be pious,*
understand his own *proper way*?

Providence. Obligations of piety and virtue, though clear, require an upright sober judging mind to perceive and feel their influence. Do the best and leave issues to heaven.

O thou *Creator of mankind,* make them all partakers of thy image and favour! And to that end, make thy ways, and thy *Son,* known upon the earth, and thy saving health among all nations! Reform the state of religion, which was set up in the perfection of wisdom and righteousness, by *Jesus Christ!* And let not the power of it be abated and lost, by gross mixtures of enthusiasm and superstition!

It * is a *vexing snare* to the man who de- 25
voureth *at random,* that which is holy; and
after *solemn religious vows* to make inquiry
concerning the *nature, or obligations of them.*

* *Insnared is he that hath eaten of the offering; but, resting on his vows, delayeth to perform them, Deut. xiii. 21. Lev. vii. 16. Eccl. v. 4, 5. Num. xv. 3. H.*

Devout seriousness. To withhold pious and charitable destinations for private ends is undoubted sacrilege. Engage not rashly, nor be indifferent about the performance. Wreat not holy things from their original purpose, Deut. xxiii. 21. Eccl. v. 3, 4. Acts v. 1, &c. Before a man makes vows let him consider well, and not be insnared.

- 26 A wife *benevolent* king scattereth like chaff the *injurious* wicked; and *not only so, but* * bringeth the † wheel of *condign punishment* over them.

Kings. Fidelity and diligence are essential to high office; that disguise itself may not escape, Psal. ci. 2, &c. The happiness of a prince should be that of his people. *R.*

- 27 The *intelligent* spirit of a man is the candle-light of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

Conscience. Power to reflect and judge of actions is our grand prerogative, Matth. vi. 1, &c. That knowledge is most complete, which improves the understanding and ennobles the heart. *R.*

We bless thee, *O most glorious Lord*, for that having placed in the best part of us, our reason and conscience, the sovereignty over our sensations, imaginations and affections; which being inferior according to the law of our nature and creation, we are bound to obey.

- 28 Mercy to need, and *strict exercise of truth*, preserve, like faithful guardians, the king in his rights: and his throne of eminence is *steadfastly* upholden by mercy more than pomp.

* Or turneth round. *H.* † Wheels were made use of to separate the husks from the grain, Isa. xxviii. 27. *H.*

Kings. The honour and comfort of high station is usefulness, suited to the extent of their power. Even necessary punishments should be with reluctance. Kings ought always to be apprehensive of those who never contradict them. *R.* Regard not personal inclination in the affairs of state. *R.*

Let true religion, *O God*, be faithfully taught, and universal virtue be effectually encouraged by the wisdom and power of those who govern; and let every one, in his peculiar station and relation, adorn his behaviour by sobriety and righteousness!

The *external* glory of young men is their 29
strength *for action*; and the *like* beauty of
old men is the grey *silvered* head.

Old age and youth. Vigour and experience, from years together, do signally conduce to public good. Happy they whose temper accords with promising outward forms, Ch. xvi. 31.

The * blueness of a *smart* wound *for correc-* 30
tion cleanseth away evil, *like a medicine*; so
do stripes, *with that same view*, the inward
parts of a man, *which seem to affect* the belly.

Correction. Some transgressors are not to be reclaimed but by severe means. Harsh potions often benefit.

* Or the cleansing of an wound seemeth an evil; so seem stripes that sink deep into the body. *H.*

C H A P. XXI.

- 1 **T**HE king's heart is in the hand of the *supreme Lord, even* * as the rivers of water are; and he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Providence and kings. Public temper and happiness do much depend upon people in station, 1 Tim. ii. 1, &c. The worst designs and actions are sometimes graciously overruled. How much more excellent is the intellectual, than the world of matter? Psal. xxxiii. 15. Divine presence and operation pervades every where. He is ever nighest to aid and comfort where he is most resembled. Corruption in courts extends itself gradually. *R.*

Unite us unto thee, *O God*, by the love of righteousness, who cannot finally prosper in unrighteousness, any more than we can prevail against *omnipotence* !

- 2 Every way of a man, *at the time of acting*, is right in his own eyes; but the Lord pondereth the *real state of his heart*.

God omniscient. Even good men may be partial to themselves, chap. xvi. 2. 1 John i. 7, &c. *God* often fulfils his designs by such methods as would seem to us calculated to disappoint them. *R.*

Suffer us not, *O God*, to descend farther into that degeneracy, which renders us incapable of any delightful and blessed converse with thee, *the Most Holy*; but grant that we may seasonably bethink ourselves, and use all proper means for the reformation of our lives, and for the refinement of our spirits: that so we may by a constant improvement of ourselves, at last be presented unto

† *Or, like as rills of water.*

thee, through the recommendation of thy son, impressed with thy divine image, and be accepted of thee by him.

To do *impartial* justice and *with* judgement 3
to our fellow-men is more acceptable to the all-
perfect equitable Lord, than the most costly splen-
did sacrifice.

Justice and sacrifice. When worship interferes with works of righteousness and mercy, these last are to be performed, Mic. vi. 6, &c. Heb. xiii. 16.

We ascribe unto thee, *O God*, the glory of the greatest goodness, directed by the greatest wisdom, and exercised by the greatest power; and as nothing is glorious but goodness, so we honour the greatest perfection of it in thee: we own with humble gratitude, that it is the peculiar privilege of our nature, that those moral perfections, which are in themselves divine, are communicable to us; and that we can imitate thee in them, and resemble thee by them, and both enjoy thee, and enjoy happiness, in the enjoyment of thee!

An high *contemning* look, and a proud heart 4
which leads to this, and the ploughing of ill
acquired property by the wicked is *heinous* sin.

Pride and injustice. Self conceit becomes quite insufferable through time. Rather part with an advantage over others, than hurt humility. What the proud intend for immediate consolation, doth often turn out the very reverse, Job xviii. 5, &c. Psal. xcii. 7. By a haughty eye a man's vice of pride is discoverable.

The *planning* thoughts of the *upright* dili- 5
gent * tend only to plenteousness; but of
every one that to avoid *honest* labour is hasty of
enriching themselves by *injurious* means, only to
disgraceful want.

* Or, will bring certain abundance. H.

Diligence and avarice. Most methods of becoming wealthy, without fair employment, are criminal. Reasonable competence is infinitely preferable. Gradual increase is safest and most lasting. Keen varied schemes for secular profit seldom issue well.

- 6 The getting of *large treasures* by a lying tongue is a vanity *which will disappoint, even after the falsehood has been* * *tossed to and fro of them that seek death, as it were by such means, instead of well enjoyed life.*

Covetousness. Buying and selling has much to fear in the way of guilt. There is an eating moth in criminal purchases. Loss of character is still more certain, Jam. v. 1, &c.

We acknowledge, *O God*, with satisfaction, that there is no power on earth, or in heaven, that can dispense with those laws of nature, the reasons of which are eternal and unchangeable; as being established not only by the supreme authority of *God*, but as being copies of those imitable perfections, the sacred original of which is in thee!

- 7 The robbery of the wicked shall, *in the end, both torture, and destroy them; because, for sake of possession, they refuse to do rettering judgement.*

Robbery. There is a falsehood of dealing as well as of speech. Legal administration of punishment is for both.

- 8 The way of a *depraved man* is † *rashly forward, and issues in strange unhappy effects; but as for the pure designing person, his work is invariably right on.*

* *Or, shall be driven by his dishonesty into snares of death. H.*

† *Or, is full of turnings, Prov. v. 3.—viii. 5. H.*

Intentions good and bad. The principal skill of some is to cheat and undermine. Equitable works are the uniform produce of fair composed intention.

To thy divine truth, *O holy God*, our souls are made subject; so that when it is perceived by our understanding, we can no more command our sentiments, than we can command the nature of things itself.

It is better to * dwell in a *narrow secreted* 9
corner of the † house-top, than with a brawling
contentious woman in a wide *elegant* house
for company.

Female contention. Inconsistency of near relatives are peculiarly vexing. Want of shelter and freedom are sufferable, in comparison. Ease of mind is difficult amidst perpetual furious storm. People given to strife see every thing in the worst light, and are soon irritated, 1 Pet. iii. 1, &c.

The soul of the wicked desireth to see and 10
pursue blameable evil; his most harmless neighbour,
therefore, findeth little or no favour in
his eyes.

Injuriousness. A heart set upon vice must be transgressing. The uncharitable are suspicious and apt to misjudge. Most people are blind to their own iniquity.

When the *rude insulting* scorner is *condignly* 11
punished, even the simple is made wise, by reflection;
and when the wise to a good degree is instructed,
he receiveth yet more knowledge.

Instruction. Scorners lose all modest regards and must

* Enjoy quietness, Gen. ii. 3. † Or on the top of a turret, 2 Kings xxiii. 12. Hos. vi. 9. Zeph. iii. 6. 2 Chron. xxvi. 15. H.

not be tenderly managed. Public punishments are meant to intimidate. Magistrates are chargeable with what they might have prevented. He who is faithful befriends many. Happy they who are ever open to conviction.

- 12 The * *sincere* righteous man wisely considereth *how* the house of the wicked *has been advanced, and doth not envy him*; but Almighty God, *sooner or later* overthroweth the wicked for their *injurious* wickedness.

Unlawful riches. We should endeavour to view the events of life, so as to be instructed from them. Few families by upright means are all at once exalted from low circumstances. The more that evils are now secreted, the more will providence take revenge, Job v. 3, &c. Psal. xxxvii. 36. It is a safe rule for one's house to cleanse from every sinful increase. High rank augments natural haughtiness.

- 13 Who so stoppeth his ears at the *petitioning* cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, *under pressures of indigence*, but shall not be heard *with acceptance*.

Untenderness. They do not properly hear the voice of distress who would keep out of their way, or contrive artful excuses to avoid aiding: Luke x. 31, 32. Few characters are more generally detestable. With what ground of confidence can they pray? Isa. i. 11, &c. Men are brethren, and each man has a right to whatever he has need of.

- 14 A gift *conferred* in secret pacifieth anger; and a *larger* reward *known to be laid up* in the

* Or when a just man giveth prosperity to the house of the wicked; he seduceth bad men unto sin, Josh. i. 8. Jer. xx. 21. H.

before for one who has been hurt even by strong wrath.

Gifts. To conciliate we ought to reverse our former injurious practices. He who gives the first offence is most apt to distrust. The more delicate both as to time and manner, the more efficacious are kind deeds, Gen. xxxii. 23.

It is the purest and most lasting joy to the 15
generous just, to do equitable judgement; but
sure grief and destruction shall be to the cruel
workers of iniquity.

Equity and fraud. Upright souls are chiefly distinguished by the pleasure they have in doing good; or becoming like unto their maker. Be not too rigid. A man's heart is the seat of religion. Conscious guilt is death to real enjoyment. Those in high office should take pleasure in being actively useful. God needs only to give the wicked over to their own passions, and immediately they become miserable. *R.*

Grant, *O God*, that all in their several places and capacities may glorify thee, by promoting that everlasting and universal righteousness, which is thy gracious design to advance unto a just sovereignty among all reasonable beings!

The man that, with his knowledge, wandereth 16
out of the way of prescribed understanding,
shall through time remain fast in the congregation
of the wicked dead.

Obstinacy. What omnipotent love prescribes is the highest reason; and is marked with clear evidence. How miserable a state is it to be driven to and fro, by divers foolish lusts? Gal. vi. 6, 7. The wicked go from one step to another, till the understanding becomes infatuated, the heart and feet run to all sorts of crimes. *R.*

Make us sensible, *O Lord*, that as none can subsist

R. 2.

without thee, so none, such as are enemies to righteousness, and therefore enemies to thee, *our God*, and children of the devil, can support themselves against the *divine supremacy* which is universal, and against that *divine power*, which is irresistible!

- 17 He that * loveth *mere bodily pleasure*, shall, *from expence and eagerness together*, be a poor man *in the end*; he that loveth *intoxicating wine*, and *sweet scented oil in particular*, shall not be rich *for any time*.

Animal gratifications. Prodigality and sloth are high ways to beggary. Even a life of mere amusement cannot be innocent. One sinful indulgence leads to another. The soul which sickens under these must have been made for higher things. They who live above the largest incomes must be ruined.

- 18 The wicked, *from their frequent, and great mispendings*, shall be *obliged to sell off*, and become as a ransom for the *thriving righteous*; and the *more lavish transgressor*, for the *inflexibly upright in dealing*.

Vice ruinous. The removing or abating of public guilt becomes an acceptable ransom for those good that remain, chap. xi. 12. An habitual honest aim comes to be well known and recompenced.

- 19 It is better to dwell in the *most desert wildernesses for self-enjoyment*, than with a *peevish, contentious, and an incessant angry* † woman.

Bad female temper. How inestimable a blessing is domestic peace! ver. 9. How great a duty. They un-

* Or *delighteth in feasting*, 2 Kings xx. 30. Gen. xxviii. 18. 1 Kings iv. 20. H. † Or *wife*, Gen. ii. 29.

derstand not religion, who make not their house a sanctuary for devotion and love. Contentious husbands ought also to think of this.

There is *a competence of treasure to be desired, and what may purchase even store of fragrant oil at times, in the dwelling of the diligent wife; but a weak wicked foolish man spendeth it quickly up.* 20

Diligence and wasting. Wisdom understands the proper use of wealth; and is often successful. Rash projectors desire too much, and in too small a compass of time. They also live fast from expectation. Intemperance is a cruel shocking vice.

He that followeth after righteousness *between man and man, and yet more estimable mercy towards the poor, findeth a life of pure enjoyment, and aiding righteousness, when his situation may require it, and certain honour.* 21

Justice and mercy. Divine promises are only made to the affectionately good, Matth. v. 6.—vi. 33. Professions without justice and almsgiving will never do. Before any one can be liberal he must be just. The most sublime delight is to imitate God. Disinterested worth extorts praise.

A prudent wife man scaleth, so to speak, what may be compared to the city of the mighty, and casteth down, not unseldom, the boasted strength of the confidence thereof. 22

Prudence. It is only by mental pious and moral accomplishments that outward advantages are rendered useful. How frequently hath art succeeded against strength. Such maintain every small step of their progress, Eccl. ix. 13, &c.

- 23 Whoſo keepeth *the words* of his mouth and his tongue *in converſation*, keepeth *the life* of his ſoul from *various ſore* troubles.

Tongue-government. What knowledge and experience doth frequently repeat muſt be important. Avoid ſtiff uſeleſs ſilence and obſerve the good rules of ſpeech. Be ever mild and condeſcending.

- 24 Proud, *inſolent* and haughty ſcorner is his name, who *regardleſs of God himſelf*, dealeth in proud *contentious* * wrath.

Wrath and contention. Haſte is *for moſt part* both impious and uncharitable. Man is a weak inſufficient creature, whom lowlineſs doth well become. Attempt not to riſe upon the real or ſuppoſed blemiſhes of another. Avoid ſatyre. Pity rather than publiſh faults.

- 25 The *unworking* deſire of the ſlothful killeth him *in time, through torment of want, and ſevere bodily diſeaſes*; for his hands, *when moſt able*, reſuſe to labour *even for a maintenance*.

Sloth. Demands increaſe as to ſtrength and number by ſluggardly wiſhes. Such an one is ever craving and ever deſtitute. The affluent themſelves have a call to work for others. To be idle is at once to ſteal and murder.

We confeſs, *O Lord*, that while we very carefully obſerved, and very much regarded that good and evil which is *natural*, and were exorbitant in our deſires of pleaſure, and in our averſions to pain; we have little regarded the much more important difference of *moral good and evil*; and ſo lived without that religious obedience, which ſhould have rendered our actions agreeable to our nature, and obſervant of the laws of thee, *our God*.

* *Or lawleſs deeds. H.*

He coveteth greedily *to live in ease*, all the 26
day long, *and is an abject beggar from sloth*;
but the *honest diligent* righteous * *has a compe-*
tence, and giveth, also to the disabled needy,
and spareth not.

Diligence and sloth. Continued desire is fatal to enjoyment and leads to covet; yea, often to steal. Beneficent charity is a debt to want; and grateful pious return. It consults with affection more than expediences, Eccl. xi. 1, &c. Matth. v. 7. Psal. xli. 1, &c. 2 Thess. iii. 10.

The *most expensive* sacrifice of the wicked is 27
an abomination to the Lord; how much more,
when he bringeth it with a *base* wicked *com-*
muting mind *for known trespasses, or to acquire*
a name.

Hypocritical devotion. Some place all their piety in bodily exercises; being either ignorant or evil designing, Isa. i. 11, &c. Mic. vi. 7. Jam. iv. 8. Our religious worship is an adoration of God; and our religious obedience is an imitation of him.

Gracious Father, as thou addest new days to our lives, so let us do the proper work of these, under the conduct and direction of thy good spirit; until we come to that rest which is provided for those who answer the relation they stand in to Christ, and are followers of God, as dear children, having Christ formed in them.

A false speaking witness, *especially if upon oath,* 28
shall perish for ever; but the man that heareth
the words of it, to declare as he knows, speaketh
constantly in support of righteous truth.

True and false witnessing. Even a common liar will

* Or his desires are fully gratified, Prov. xxi. 13. H.

soon expose himself, and perish from all credit, interest and usefulness. It is lying to aver as true, what we are not certain of.

- 29 A wicked man hardeneth his face, *from attending to wise seasonable counsel*; but as for the upright in his aims *, he directeth his way of behaviour by clear revealed rule.

Uprightness. Some are at pains to deceive themselves. Those who are sincere do search and pray, as in Psal. cxix. 33, 34. Vice is progressive, Ex. vii. 8, &c. Psal. i. 1, 2.

Bring all men, *gracious God*, to the knowledge of the true religion; that it may have a weighty influence upon them, for the transforming them into the likeness of *Christ*; and grant that Christians may not only be under an external denomination from their religion; but may be endowed with a principle of life by it, and that *Christ* may live in them!

- 30 There is no *successful* wisdom, nor *sagacity* of understanding, nor indeed counsel from any quarter, against the unerring righteous Lord God Almighty.

Providence. Our best judgement is to follow God; and devoutly to request his aids, Psal. cxxxix. 1, &c.

Keep it, O Lord, upon our minds, that the time is short, in which those who are good can suffer from the power and malice of those who are bad; and in which those who are bad should repent and become good: and that as soon as this short time is ended, there will be a separation of the one from the other unto eternity.

- 31 The horse is prepared by his judicious rider against the awful day of battle; but victo-

* Or, he correcteth his going.

Ranks of life. All are equal in the main. A just bond of union. They who labour for others, lay them under an obligation of justice and gratitude, Mat. ii. 10. Isa. iii. 15. Amos viii. 4. There ought to be neither loathing, nor envy.

Grant, *O supreme Lord*, that thy moral perfections, of goodness, righteousness and truth, being communicated to all thy creatures that are intelligent and voluntary, they may be to one another, according to their abilities, what thou art to them all, just and good, merciful and beneficent.

- 3 A prudent man foreseeth the *approaching* evil, and hideth himself *from its power if possible*; but the *careless credulous* simple pass on *unprepared*, and are often punished by *extreme troubles*.

Prudence and weak simplicity. Caution is requisite in every step of life. Weigh attentively probable circumstances and effects. Advise with the judicious aged.

- 4 By humility and the *true filial* fear of the Lord, are *noble satisfying* riches and honour *with right judges*, and *sweet enjoyment of life*.

Happiness. A habitual devout temper is modest. What are all the wisest and best compared with him who is infinite and infallible? Godliness is profitable unto all things, Psal. cxii. 1, &c.—lxxxiv. 1-2.

- 5 Thorns of *instant trouble*, and snares *holding down to what is yet worse*, are in the way of the *froward transgressor*; he that doth keep his soul *to be governed by a divine rule*, shall be far from them both.

Mildness and wrath. Impulses of mere humour are liable to affliction severe and unexpected. Though quiet

outwardly they are inwardly tormented. Watch the first emotions of evil to repress them.

By the simple method of catechizing, train up 6
a child in the pious, just, charitable way of life
he should go : and when he is old, from joyous
habit and custom, it is more than probable he will
not depart from it.

Education of children. Governors of youth have an awful charge. Check the buddings of vice by mild remonstrance. Principles are essential to right behaviour. As reason unfolds it should be addressed in proportion to endear what is good. Easy condescending forms of speech ought all along to be used ; and the most important things oftenest insisted upon. Instructive histories have a fine effect. A few melancholy unnatural exceptions should not be urged against common experience, Eph vi. 4. Gen. xviii. 19. Lead the mind gradually on and make truth relish. R. Dry maxims and cold precepts disgust. R. Heb. v. 10.

The rich in common ruleth with a high hand 7
over the poor, and the borrower is too often ob-
liged to be submissive as a servant to the severe
selfish lender.

Influence and dependences. Favours from men are chiefly to be valued by the views with which they are given. They should be made to fit easy both in their manner and expected returns. It is dreadful to harass those whom we should support. Better to want for a time than to be under obligation to a proud superior. Even the natural burden of gratitude is not small to a delicate mind. Parents themselves are to be obeyed in the Lord.

He that soweth iniquity shall reap the vexa- 8
tious vanity of disappointment ; and with the

very ensign-rod * of his *causeless violent* anger
he shall fail † of his hope.

Vice deceitful. There is a natural punishment annexed to most kinds of guilt, Job iv. 8. Hof. x. 9. A vexatious rich man, will meet with his match in time, Isa. xiv. 9, &c. Beneficent people are the most happy.

- 9 He that hath a bountiful *aiding* eye shall be blessed *in himself, and by others*; for he giveth *largely* of his bread, *and like substance*, to the *well known regular* poor.

Liberality. Those who are covetous hardly see any thing which they do not wish to have. The charitable are satisfied and ready to spare for modest want. A sight of wo with such is equal to an earnest petition. It is accompanied with self-enjoyment, the favour of God and of all the good. Objects of beneficence are as various as human wants, 2 Cor. ix. 6, &c. Matth. xx. 15. Prov. xxiii. 6.

- 10 Cast out the *proud mischievous* scorner, and contention shall *soon* go out; yea, *upbraiding* strife and *mutual* reproach shall *for ever* cease.

Pride and contention. Vain conceit enflames by the slightest disappointment. To vilify and scoff is what most people can do; and yet is seldom forgiven. Hearken not to a reviling tongue, Psal. ci. 5. 2 Thess. iii. 11, 14.

- 11 He that loveth pureness of heart-*submission* to government, for the grace of *speech out of* his lips, the king *himself* shall be his friend.

Submission to government. The upright deal in soft conciliating methods, and are the bond and joy of social

* Or, *sceptre*, Gen. xlix. 10. H. † Or, *be broken*. H.

life, Jer. ix. 4. &c. There is a dignity and sweetness in honest words. Those of station should be desirous to find out and recompence them, Psal. ci. 6, 7.

May all those, *O God of infinite majesty and love*, who by their office and distinction, are charged with the temporal welfare and eternal salvation of men, faithfully acquit themselves; so that they may give a good account of their trust to thee, in the great day of the Lord!

The *complacent* eyes of the Lord preserve **12**
those who have thorough practical knowledge,
and he overthroweth in his anger, the *mischievous* words of the *deliberate persevering*
transgressor.

God's love and hatred. No specious appearances can deceive *infinite wisdom*. He takes less delight to dwell in heaven, than in the soul of the just. *R.*

The day is thine, *O Lord*, and the night also is thine, who never slumberest nor sleepest; be thou our perpetual guardian and protection, who hast declared thyself to repenting sinners reconciled by *Jesus Christ*.

The *habitual* slothful man saith, to *extenuate* **13**
his guilt, there is a lion of hinderance without,
I shall be slain outright, if I meet him even in
the streets.

Sloth. Indolence is quick to invent excuses. Necessary projects are often much retarded by it. Where *God* and duty call, let no man fear.

Suffer us not, *O gracious God*, by the consideration of any unwarrantable example among ungodly men, or by the consideration of any difficulty and uneasiness, to be prevailed upon to give up ourselves as lost; but remembering our glorious original, from whence we are fallen, our remaining possibility and capacity of restoration, may we set ourselves, under thee, our kind Creator and Preserver, to become again such as thou mayest own, and delight in!

The mouth of strange *whorish* women **14**
S

is dangerous to virtue, even as a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord, for profligacy of manners, shall fall therein by just permission.

Immodest women. Females lost to virtue ought to be instantly fled from. They who deliberate have already forgot God, and are in the utmost hazard of being abandoned by him.

We confess, O Lord, that estrangement from thee is an alienation from our proper use, and from our necessary happiness, and from ourselves; but by opposition and enmity against thee, we pass into another contrary nature, and are so far, not any part of thy creation, but the most unaccountable defection from it. Help us to remember this, and shew ourselves men!

- 15 *Self-willed foolishness is too often bound up in the heart of a child indulged, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.*

Correction. Most young tempers may and ought to be won by mild methods, without unseasonable yielding. Correct at first by tender expostulations; and afterwards if need be with more smartness. Desist not till there is good hope of success.

- 16 *He that oppresseth the poor to increase his more than sufficient riches, and he that giveth to the rich, when they ask, shall surely come to want.*

Oppression. Plain truths are the most beneficial. Ill got treasures do not long last, Psal. xlix. 14, 16, &c.—xxxvii. 1. Sighing and groaning fetch help from heaven.

- 17 *Deliberately bow down thine ear, hear with attention the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto the proper use of my divine knowledge.*

Instruction. Obvious truths should be put into various lights, and be honestly prepared for.

For it is a pleasant thing *at the very time*, if 18
thou keep them within thee *to meditate upon* ;
and they shall withal be fitted *for ready suitable*
useful converse * in thy lips.

Meditation and converse. The progress of wisdom is unspeakably joyous, and makes expression easy, Matth. xii. 35, &c.

Therefore that thy *firm* trust may be in the 19
Lord *Jehovah*, I have made known, *as above*,
to thee this day, *the pleasure and benefits of religious discoveries*, even to those that send thee
also, for being instructed.

Learning to be encouraged. No principle or rule of piety but is to be found in Solomon's Proverbs; and most of them often repeated. The more we advance in comfortable divine experiences, the more doth *Almighty God* approve of us. In the darkness of trouble he will be our light.

O *blessed Lord*, and universal governor of heaven and earth, may we thy creatures and servants whom thou hast endowed with understanding and reason, and so made capable of knowing, adoring and trusting in thee, present ourselves and our acknowledgements often at thy footstool ! We do not forget that the sufficiency of us creatures is in conjunction with thee the Creator; and that we who can do nothing without thee, can do all things through him that strengtheneth us.

Have not I written *before* to thee excellent 20
things, in *respect of counsels for good behaviour*,
and knowledge of *various other important things besides* ?

Counsels and knowledge. Right rules of life assimilate the soul of man to its divine original, in disposition and happiness. Subtile refinements serve often only to spoil the understanding and corrupt the heart. R.

* *As maxims or proverbs.* H.

- 21 That I might make thee know the *undoubted* certainty of the words of *celestial* truth; and that thou mightest answer *with confidence* the words of truth, *so clear precious and authoritative* to them * that send unto thee *for being similarly instructed*.

Instructors. The sure grounds and evidences of what we both believe, and do, should be well understood, 1 Pet. iii. 15. Rom. iv. 22. Rest not in mere head-knowledge, Isa. lv. 3.

Cause us to take cognizance of thee, *our God*, and to make just acknowledgements to thee, by words of celebration, and acts of obedience; and not ungratefully to disown that bounty by which we subsist: and contrary to the conviction of reason, the ingenuity of nature, and the demands of conscience, to contemn and slight what is most glorious and adorable!

- 22 Rob not the poor *in any degree*, because he is poor *to resist*; neither yet more *cruelly* oppress the afflicted *from want or suffering which thou canst not but know*, in the very † gate of judgement.

Oppression. No outward circumstance is esteemed from being just and justly dealt with. The more guilt is aggravated, the severer punishment is due to it. Exact not with rigour. Pity and aid the simple. Dread ways and means which require concealment. Courts of justice ought ever to be accessible, and to retain pleaders for the poor.

- 23 For the Lord God of sabbath will plead their cause *with success in the end*, and miserably † spoil the soul-peace of those that *cruelly unnaturally* spoiled them.

Oppression. The seat of divine judgement is impartial

* *Thy branches or children*, Cant. iv. 13. † *Or courts of justice*, Deut. xxi. 19.—xxv. 7. H. ‡ *Or harass*. H.

and a model to every other, Zech. vii. 9, &c. Ex. xxii. 21. Job. xxxi. 21. *God cannot suffer an eternal blemish in his work; and therefore light with goodness, must triumph over infernal darkness. R.*

Make no friendship with a *quick* angry 24
man, and with a furious *resentive* man, thou
shalt not *often* go *even* for *commerce*; lest thou 25
learn *from example* his *rash* *hazardous* ways,
and get, *in time*, a *fatal* snare to thy soul.

Friendship. A necessary engagement to the comfort of life, requires both delicacy of choice and future behaviour. Those who are apt to take offence, must be jealous, proud, domineering. Exchange of sentiments and hearts prove more and more endearing.

Be not thou one of them that *hastily* strike 26
hands *of agreement* for *life*, or of them that are
similarly rash sureties for debts.

Engagements and suretyship. A necessary duty binds all who are able; but in different cases we are bound to deliberate much, chap. vi. 1.—xi. 15. Engage not for more than can be paid with justice.

If thou hast nothing *of money sufficient* to 27
pay *for failing* of a *principal*, why should he
who is creditor have it in *his power* to take away
thy *very* bed from under thee?

Suretyship. Easy tempers have much to fear amongst the necessitous and artful. To become liable to suffer from law and strict justice is an alarming state. Hard lying and painful reflections are not easily supported.

Remove not, *with thy knowledge*, the an- 28
cient *dividing* land-mark, which thy *fore-fa-*
thers have set *to determine property*.

Injustice. Fraudulent encroachments are the most criminal, Deut. xix. 14.—xxvii. 17. To vitiate writs

is a guilt of like kind. Every one ought to enjoy what is their own in peace.

- 29 Seest thou a man *that is* diligent in his *pro-*
per business? he shall stand before kings, he
shall not stand *always* before mean *obscure*
men.

Industry. He who carefully dispatches work excites attention, acquires credit and wealth, so as to be even courted, Prov. xxi. 5. Gen. xli. 19.

C H A P. XXIII.

- 1 **W**HEN thou fittest *upon invitation*, to
eat with a ruler of *opulence*, con-
sider diligently * what is *laid* before thee;
2 and be *cautious*, as though thou didst † put a
sharp-edged knife to thy throat, in place of thy
mouth, if thou be a man given to *gluttonous* ap-
3 *petite*. Be not *eagerly* desirous of his *rare*
expensive dainties: for they are *deceitful*
overloading meat.

Gluttony. Temperance is a chief virtue of religion. Rich people are most in danger of excesses. The poor, by being seldomer tempted, are sometimes put into great hazard: then reason ought most to be consulted. The meats may be splendid, if people set not their hearts upon them. Hospitality, and division of remains among the indigent, is truly noble. The throat has been often fatal to both health and life. Consult with real and not

* Or, in whose presence thou art. H. † Or, put a restraint upon thine appetite, Hab. i. 13. Dent. viii. 9. H.

provoked appetite. Beware of acquiring a taste above station. Think of your young rising family.

Labour not *with an assiduous solicitude* to be 4
soon rich; cease from thine own *early over-*
valued wisdom. Wilt thou *still* set thine * 5
eager eyes upon that which *in comparison* is not
fit to be thought of among real important things?
For riches, *be they amassed to the utmost*, certainly
make themselves wings *at last*, they fly for
ever away from us, as an eagle *swift and strong*
doth toward the clouds of heaven.

Avarice. Worldly goods are not to be despised but
sought for in measure. Money is not an end but a
mean of temporary support, Matth. vi. 33. John vi. 27.
A pious, just, charitable heart, is the only meet one for
a better state. Things of time never yield what they
promise, besides their being short and uncertain, 1 Tim.
vi. 17, 9.

Eat thou not *when thou canst avoid it, even* 6
the necessary bread of him that hath an evil
deceitful eye †, neither desire thou *with ear-*
nestness an invitation to accept of his dainty
meats. For as he thinketh in his *niggard* 7
heart, so is he *most basely dissembling*; Eat and
drink *plentifully*, saith he *with his lips* to thee,
but his heart *of real affection* is not *at all* with
thee. The morsel which thou hast eaten, 8
shalt thou vomit up *to him, not only in his*
thoughts, but in his subsequent visits for more than
ample return; and thus shalt thou lose the late

* Compare Isa. ix. 1. Eccl. v. 11. 1 Jo. ii. 17.

† Both errors and virtues of the mind make use of bodily
members, chap. xxii. 19.—xxiii. 4, 5. whence they are
named.

apparent benefit of thy whole former sweet words.

Niggardly dissimulation. He who covets worships mammon. The generously hospitable, deal not at large in fair speeches, that are often confuted by a trembling hand, dejected look, or sullen peevish manner in the end. The very best things from a sordid miser are undesirable. Their feast is proverbial. Love without dissimulation. Be pleasant and not teasing.

- 9 Speak not gently into the ears of a *weak obstinate* fool, for *in place of amending*, he will despise the *very wisdom* of thy words.

Rebuke. Counsel, with admonition, ought ever to take place where there is probable hope of being useful. In any other case they only serve to increase guilt, Matth. vii. 6. Prov. ix. 7. To appear consistent the wicked affect disbelief of both principle and rule, Psal. xxxix. 1, &c.

We, thy creatures, *holy Father*, who have been alienated from thee, and depraved in our nature, by customary and habitual sins, lift up our souls unto thee, imploring thy compassion towards thy offspring, the work of thy hands; and making our requests to thee, for restoration and recovery!

- 10 Remove not the old land-mark, *for division of property*; and enter not *thus* * into the
11 fields of the *unexperienced* fatherless. For their *protecting Redeemer from injuries* is mighty: he shall plead their cause with thee, *till thou art exposed and reprobated universally*.

Injustice. That is fearful hurt which is done to weak, distressed people, chap. xxii. 28. Eccl. iv. 1. No human laws nor evidence can reach to every case, Deut. xix. 14, &c. Ex. xxii. 5, &c. Divine knowledge, and

* 2 Chron. xx. 10. H.

power, extend to all possibilities, Job. xxi. 30, 13, &c. Eccl. xxv. 12.

Apply thine heart unto *this momentous* instruction, and thine ears *from thence* to the words of *sound saving* knowledge. 12

Learning. Even the clearest obligations of justice are too apt to be overlooked. The utmost extent of duty should be known and pondered. Some seldom hear and always with prejudice, John. iii. 19, &c. Noble frankness in discourse, shuns all evasions. *R.*

Our time, *O Lord*, which is in thy hand, may be very short, and our death may be very near : and how shall we then accomplish the work of the whole day in the close of the evening, when the night approacheth wherein no man can work.

Withhold not *needful* correction from the child of *thy heart* ; for if thou beatest him with the rod. *when his crimes are aggravated*, he shall not die under *judicious discipline*. Thou shalt beat him, *I repeat it again*, even with the rod, and shalt *thereby* deliver his soul from *premature death*, leading down to the perdition of hell. 13 14

Correction. Youth and unreflecting levity are designed by heaven to be under authoritative government. After gentle methods it would be cruel often to neglect what is more severe. Mistaken tenderness increases new improper demands. A fullen obstinate temper must not be yielded to. The hell of a wicked conscience is worse than death, Prov. xiii. 24.

My dear son, if thine heart be wise, for religious and moral obedience, my tender heart shall then rejoice, even mine. Yea my most secret reins shall rejoice, when thy lips, in more advanced age, speak of right things, to the improvement and happiness of others. 15 16

Good children. Under *God*, children are most indebted to the instruments of their existence. Filial affection is a kind of instinct and not to be violated without horror, Rom. i. 30, 31. Son is a term of love, which cannot be commented upon.

- 17 Let not thine heart envy *prosperous* sinners: but be thou in the fear of the *supreme and only* Lord all the day long.

Fear of God. For the trial of goodness, vice is sometimes allowed to succeed, Psal. lxxiii. 11, &c. Envy itself is impious. Belief of unerring wisdom, and the future state, ought to quiet every solicitude, Psal. xxxvi. 1. Strengthen these by meditation, reading and prayer. No scheme of virtue can answer where *Deity* is not taken in. This affects all. The most improved glory in them.

Separate us, *O God*, from vain imaginations, that we may be at entire liberty for the use of those means by which we have sacred communion with thee! As every day presents with opportunities for the important care of our souls, which is to end in heavenly life; so receive us for that purpose, into thy protection, guidance and blessing!

- 18 For, *be the wicked ever so great for a time*, surely there is an *entire end to them*, and thine expectation shall not be *finally* cut off.

End of good and bad. What catches and detains the sensual eye will soon and for ever cease. What ends the sinners joy commences and finishes out blessedness to the righteous. Prosperous vice is an argument for another world, Psal. xxxvii 3, &c.

Holy and merciful Father, let religious dispositions be established in us, and unchangeable resolutions of living agreeable to thy revealed will, upon full satisfaction of reason and judgement, that what thou dost command is entirely for our good; and that thou hast been exceedingly gracious in making us capable of such an obedience, and laying us under the most natural and indispensable obligations to it.

Hear thou, *with attention*, my *dearly beloved* 19
son, and be wise *to avoid intemperance*; and
guide thine heart *itself* in the *sober useful way*
of true virtue.

Temperance. Be not seduced by appearance. Advice,
though unpalatable at the time, may be kind and bene-
ficial, upon the whole. Understanding, memory and
affection, should be full of what is right, chap. iv. 23.

Be not often among *known wine-bibbers*; 20
among riotous eaters of flesh *nicely cooked*.
For the *shameless drunkard*, and the glutton 21
likewise, shall come to *abject poverty*: and *ha-*
bitual sluggard drowns, shall in time clothe
a man with *mean tattered rags*.

Luxury and idleness. Corporeal pleasures waste and
ruin. The utmost weight of argument becomes neces-
sary to those who are just entering upon the world.
Studioseness to eat and drink demonstrates a low sensual
turn, Rom. xiii. 13. Luxury must have constant new
gratifications. It is also the most effectual mean to sink
courage. R.

O glorious and holy Lord God, we have too often lived, as
if we were made only, or chiefly, for the exercise of the
body, and for the enjoyment of this world; and have
been governed from *without* by the objects of sense, and
incentives of passion, rather than from *within*, by the con-
duct of reason, and the direction of conscience.

Hearken *diligently* unto thy father that be- 22
gat thee, and despise not *the pious warnings of*
thy mother when she is old.

Parents to be honoured. Sensual lusts are often too
strong for the clearest powerful arguments. It is of use
to balance one strong passion with another. Mar not
parental happiness. Study tempers of the young.

Buy the truth *of every kind*, with all due pains, 23
and sell it not *away again for any thing secu-*

lar, also prudent wisdom and instruction to live well, and understanding of necessary requisite belief

Truth. No one is sufficient soon and safely to direct himself. What is valuable requires labour of body and mind. Truth is often clouded by prejudices and abounding corrupt maxims. There is no good so estimable as sound practical knowledge, Wisd. chap. vii. This will either govern or condemn.

The truths of thee, *our God*, which we were by nature subject to, we have not consulted; but so far as they were unwillingly perceived by the reason of our minds, we have rebelled against them: and though we could not subdue and destroy, we have forced and overruled that governor within us, set up and authorized by thy divine wisdom and love.

- 24 The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice *in the usefulness of his advanced life*; and he that * begetteth *such* a wise child, shall
25 have joy even to glorying of him. Thy attention to teachable years, and thy solicitous father and mother shall be glad indeed; and she that bare thee shall thus rejoice to her latter end.

Good children. No delight can equal that of worthy immediate descendants. It more than balances former solicitous hours, cares, griefs and labours. The reverse is pain above every other.

- 26 My very dear son, give me thine heart to be instructed, and let thine eyes of judgement ever after observe my prescribed ways.

Knowledge applied. Without the heart in religion, there can be no hope of success. Fear may deter from sin; but esteem and affection follow hard after good. Treasure and fond desire unite close, Jam. i. 22.

- 27 For to caution against one most frequent ruinous

* Or, hath begotten. H.

vice, remember that a whore is like a covered deep ditch, which betrays and drowns into horrible vexatious evils; and a strange prostitute woman is a narrow pit-fall, whence there is no recovery, or but rare.

Immodest women. Scandalous debasing commerce between the sexes loses all respect for ennobling qualities. Each party professes that which they are entire strangers to. Few difficulties in conversion are so hard to overcome, Hof. i. 11. Crush it in the birth. What enchants with sweetness ends in poison. *R.*

She also lieth in wait *to seduce as robbers do* 28
for a prey, and *thus increaseth wofully the*
number of transgressors among men.

Immodest women. Purity is or ought to be a chief female jewel. One unguarded moment doth often terminate in loathsome impudence. Arts of love gain with too much ease upon the unwary.

Who * hath wo? who hath *bitter* sorrow? 29
who hath *frequent hot* contentions? who hath
silly peevish babbling? who hath wounds with-
out *proper* cause? who hath redness of eyes,
to disgrace and injure agreeable looks? They 30
that tarry long at the wine, they that go to
seek *with solicitude* mixt choice wine, *to enflame*
their appetite.

Drunkennes. The deformity and wretchedness of a drunkard are great deterring arguments. Questions brief and clear do elegantly express abhorrence. A corrupted blotted constitution is the sure issue of an intemperate habit. Quarrels become next to unavoidable. Some sleep their last by means of a furcharge. They have not friendship in their power.

Look not thou *with eager desire* upon the 31

* Or, *to whom belongeth.* *H.*

wine, when it is red, when it giveth his *enticing sparkling* colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright, *by strength and good keeping*.

Bodily senses to be governed. Heart and head are often led by the eye. Avoid temptation if you would be safe; and what has formerly proved dangerous. Drink and eat to subsist or to cheer at most. Forego not at any time the power of usefulness.

- 32 At the last *however pleasant and generous the liquor may seem*, it biteth and keepeth fast hold like a *provoked* serpent; and stingeth to death like a *poisoning* adder.

Drunkenness. To horror of mind after an extreme *debauch*, is added a feverish nauseating stomach and racking head. Such live not for most part half their time; and then die under cruel agonies. Often sudden and infamous.

- 33 Thine eyes, *with liquorish heat*, shall seek after and behold strange *dissolute sensual* women; and thine *ungoverned* heart shall lead thee also to utter *impious* perverse *disturbative* things.

Intoxication and whoredom. Drunkenness is the very parent of uncleanness, and sometimes perjured adulteries. Hof. iv. 11. How cruel to dearest intimates! Important secrets too are revealed; and thereby chief friends divided. Mad wretch! And all for a sensual moment.

- 34 Yea, thou shalt be from numerous *thick-set dangers*, as he that lieth down on *ship-board*, while in the midst of the *wide raging* sea, or as he that yet more *hazardously* lieth upon some
35 narrow room on the top of a *high* mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, *by sad effects*, and yet I was not sick to death; they have

beaten me *fore*, and I felt it not, *so as to amend*; when shall I awake to former *soundness*? I will seek to repeat it yet again.

Drunkenness. Tippling no less than frequent hard drinking, render people sottish. They both endanger trade and health to a great degree. They become at once the causes of stupidity and obstinacy. Even smart suffering doth not reclaim. Desperation crowns the horrible guilt.



C H A P. XXIV.

BE not thou envious against evil *prosper-*
ing men; neither desire, on account of
their splendid entertainments, to be often in com-
pany with them.

Envy. To live above the world is a great and difficult duty, 1 John ii. 15, &c. Fret not at successful vice but rather compassionate. Frothy delights promise more than they are able to make good; and cannot be reflected upon with ease, Psal. cxli. 3, 4. Fly from infested houses and companies.

For their heart *being full of the world** stu-
dieth *what must lead to destruction*; and their
lips *from thence*, do principally talk of mischief.

Evil company. When the animal spirits are up, people are apt to be unguarded. Intemperance is the mother of various crimes, Psal. cxix. 115, 118, &c. Separation is the proper mean of cure. R.

Not through *such neglect* but *steadfast exercise* 3

* Or meditateth on rapine. H.

- of wisdom is an house of good accommodation builded up, and by the influence of similar prudent understanding, it is long established:
 4 and by continuance of knowledge shall the chambers be filled up with all manner of precious and pleasant riches.

Domestic wisdom. Right conduct cannot subsist without a well informed mind. Having fixed upon a proper end we should next think of the proper means. When a family has been reared, its credit should be kept up. Few in comparison are ruined by real misfortune. Wicked heirs destroy soon the purchases of much honest labour. Sobriety is the basis of virtue. That possession is pleasant which is clean from measures of fraud and violence. The poor also receive from thence what is their due; which renders the fare of life doubly delicious.

- 5 A wise behaving man is strong, from his good habits and friendships; yea a man of such excellent beneficial knowledge increaseth strength,
 6 while he lives. For by wise counsel, when it is needed, thou shalt make thy war: and in the multitude of counsellors, like him, there is unquestionable safety.

Strength from knowledge. Application is the glory of understanding. Skill of men and things is far superior to bodily vigour. Haste from passion is always a sign of weakness. Men of skill and prudent fore-cast are fittest to command. Expect not national virtue from effeminate characters, Job xii. 13. 1 Chron. v. 2, &c. Eccl. ix. 16.

- 7 Wisdom of discourse is too high for a weak dissipated fool: he * openeth not his mouth in the gates of general and learned associates.

Useful conversation. School-learning extends to va-

* Or, let him not open. H.

rious subjects. Of these, to judge and plead ably are most important. They who officiate in courts ought to be studious, cool and impartial.

He that *with his knowledge* deviseth new 8
ways to do evil, shall be called *with justice* a
mischievous expert person. For the preme- 9
ditated thought of hurtful foolishness is sin;
and the scorner of virtue is an abomination to
most men.

Evil devices. Fraudulent and violent measures argue a base state of heart. Thoughts are then evil when harboured with delight. To scorn at good demonstrates obstinate guilt, and is a common nuisance.

If thou faint from patience and virtue in the 10
day of adversity, thy * strength of religious
principle is small.

Patience. To foresee and provide against trouble is a chief point of wisdom. Genuine submission admits of sensibility, Heb. xii. 5, &c.; but sinks not. Trials are the touchstone of sincere virtue, Rom v. 4, &c. Jam. i. 2. Hypocrites will serve God under bright sunshine. Even death changes not the sentiments of pious souls.

Cause us, good Lord, to submit willingly to thy chastisements, which are the remedy of our souls, and the discipline of our benefactor; who dost not necessarily afflict or grieve the children of men, but if need be, causest them to suffer adversity in order to their amendment, and the bringing forth in them that are exercised thereby, the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

If thou forbear the use of proper means, to 11
deliver them that are drawn unto clear hazards of death, and those in particular, that
are just ready to be slain: If thou sayest, in 12
defence of thy cruel sluggishness, behold, we

† Or, in fortitude thou art wanting. H.

knew it not: doth not he that pondereth the heart confider *so as to detest* it? And he that keepeth thy *own* soul in life, doth not he *most assuredly* know it? And shall not he render to every man according to *what* his works *really are*, though *misunderstood by others*?

Untendernefs. Where ability and knowledge are, there is accountableness for trust, Jam. iv. 17. A faint-hearted silence may prove destructive, Psal. lxxxii. 3, 4. Isa. lviii. 6, 7. They who are slow to do good are so far unjust. He who may know should know. Falsehood added to cruel neglect is an extreme aggravation. God is privy to our most secret spiritual recesses; and has all our interests in his hands, chap. xxxi. 8, 9. Job xxiv. 11.

- 13 My *dearly beloved* son, eat thou honey, *when in thy power*, because it is in *most cases* good for health; and the *first drippings of the* honey-comb, which is *peculiarly* sweet to thy
- 14 *unvitiated* taste. So like both shall the *distinct* knowledge of *practical* wisdom be unto thy soul: when thou hast found it out, and had *some good experience*, then there shall be a *sure immediate* reward, and thy expectation, *as to another eternal world*, shall not be cut off.

Occasions to be observed. Regard to taste and profit should be conjoined. What the *divine goodness* doth liberally provide may be understood as most valuable. This holds especially true as to religious and moral rules with their principles. Our most godly homage is purity of virtue.

We confess, *O Lord*, that if we were assured of as much time for the renovation, and transformation of our nature, as we have spent in the depraving and corrupting it; yet the prospect of a difficulty like that of the Ethiopian changing his skin, and the leopard his spots, might justly terrify us who are accustomed to sin, and

now at last, upon our utmost peril, are obliged to learn to do well.

Lay not wait, O wicked *injurious* man, 15
against the dwelling of the *harmless useful*
righteous; spoil not his resting place. For 16
know, that a just charitable man falleth by way
of trial to his *virtue*, seven times, and yet under
his *Almighty friend*, riseth up *no less frequently*
again; but the *obstinate* wicked man shall fall
into *irretrievable* mischief.

Innocence supported. The best of people are sometimes cruelly opposed, yet providence befriends them as to their chief interest, 1 John iii. 9. 1 Cor x 13.

We thank thee, O *supreme Lord and governor*, that being rightly instructed concerning thee *our God*, we can expect from thee nothing less than what *infinite goodness* does bestow; and we can fear nothing worse than what the *same goodness* doth inflict!

Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth into 17
fore affliction; and let not thine heart be glad
when by *carelessness* or worse he stumbleth into
gross crimes; Lest the *equitable gracious* Lord, 18
as must happen, see it, and it greatly displease
him, and he turn away *the effects* of his wrath
from him to *thyself*.

Revenge. The noble spirit of religion is to do good to all and harm none. Who should think of hurting such? To rejoice in the miseries of others is satanish, John viii. 44. Mat. v. 9. To pardon others is an essential term of our obtaining pardon, Rom. xii. 17, &c.

We extol and glorify thee, O *God*, who will not suffer any evil to happen, or be done, in any part of thy universe, but what thou, *who art the chiefest good*, dost permit among thy creatures, to whom thou art original; and which the most *unerring wisdom* orders for good, to those who are capable of it.

- 19 Fret not thyself *against divine permission*, because of *successful* evil men, neither be thou
 20 envious at the *greatly prospering* wicked: For there shall be no *desirable* reward upon the whole to the *impenitent* evil man, the *bright shining* candle of the wicked, *for a time*, shall be *forever* put out.

Submission and envy. God's love and hatred cannot always be determined by people's outward state, Psal. lxxiii. 3, &c. Be not uneasy and far less arraign divine conduct. His plan is unmeasurable. How bitter is the remembrance of death to the wicked?

Blessed be thou, *O Lord*, who hast so ordered things, as to make that misery, which is the punishment of sin, instrumental for restoring that duty, which is the happiness of us reasonable creatures; and that there is no such severity, as delighting in the death of a sinner, but hadst rather that he should turn from his sin and live.

- 21 My son, fear thou *to offend against* the Lord, and *against* the king; and meddle not *in the most distant manner* with them that are given
 22 to *hazardous* change. For their calamity shall *at length* rise suddenly, and who knoweth *so as to describe* the *utter* ruin of them both?

Fear of God and the King. A habitual belief of divine presence and inspection is proof against any trial. Even a king's orders are only to be regarded in the second place. Motives of wantonness or selfishness ought to be abhorred in changing, 2 Pet. ii. 10, 12. Jude 11. An oppressor of mild government is a public pest.

- 23 These things also belong to the wise in *high office*. It is not good, *but the reverse*, to have respect of persons in judgement, *so as to favour them*.

Partiality. Prudence and equity should be well thought upon by superiors. Parties ought first to be heard at length, and then their claims honestly determined, Deut. i. 17, &c.

He that saith unto the wicked, *either by* 24
word or deed, thou art *to be honoured as* righte-
ous; him shall the people *who suffer from*
them curse, *whole* nations shall abhor him.
But to them that *honestly* rebuke him *for his* 25
guilt shall be delight, and a good *general* blessing shall come upon them.

Impartiality. The laws of truth and the conviction of our own minds are to be held sacred. Flattery is odious, pestive. What things are equal have the common sense of mankind upon their side. It is superlatively pleasant to act above selfish designs, and greatly conciliating, Job xxix. 7, &c.

Every man shall *have desires of esteem and* 26
love, which would lead to kiss his *gracious salu-*
tary lips, that giveth a right *seasonable* answer
in judgement.

Gracious truth. Be serious, advise, consult and judge, 1 Tim. ii. 1, &c. Such rulers are above all value. Justness of thought leads to graceful expression and manner.

Prepare *materials for thy work without*, and 27
make it fit for thyself in the field; and after-
wards build *up orderly* thine house.

Order. Discretion in business is pleasant and successful. The diligent avoid all stops from want of necessary articles. Good examples become useful to many. Things most requisite merit our best thought and execution. How ungraceful is a fair large house among grounds wild and uncultivated? A small neat dwelling surprises, delights. Prudence disappointed obtains universal pity.

- 28 Be * not a witness of evil against thy offending neighbour without some good cause; and when bound to speak truth, deceive not purposely with thy lips.

Truth in witnessing. Mankind are brethren, Luke x. 30, &c. There is much danger in rash ultroneous witnessing, Matth. v. 22. Think with severe caution. Beware of equivocating. Repeat not in discourse even real evil; but for some great public advantage, 2 Thess. iii. 6, &c. Cruelty and falsehood mark what is infernal.

- 29 Say not, when provoked, I will do so in revenge to him as he hath causelessly done to me: and I will, as occasion offers, render to the base malicious man according to his bated work.

Revenge. Rules of public justice are not to be applied by private individuals, Matth. v. 38. The guilt of the aggressor is exceeded by him who imitates. It is weak, impious, hurtful, Deut. xxxii. 35.

- 30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard itself of the man so void of understanding. And lo, in place of good for human benefit, it was all grown over with choaking thorns, and thick deep-rooted nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone-wall thereof was in many parts quite broken down.
- 31 Then I saw with indignation, and considered it well; † I looked upon it contemptuously again and again, and received much beneficial instruction.
- 32 Yet said the wretch of a man, when it was in his power to have addressed his own soul otherwise, a little more sleep for the present, a little slumber.

* Or, bear not false testimony against thy neighbour, neither influence others by thy persuasions. H. † Compare Eccl. iv. —vii. 14. H.

at least, a little folding of the hands to *procure* *desireable* sleep; So shall thy poverty *like his*, 34 *when imitated*, come *sudden*, as one that *travelleth in haste*; and thy *extreme* want as *from* an *unconquerable* armed man.

Idleness. Order and diligence are needful to success. The very picture of sloth is detestable. Ignorance itself may improve from thence. Regard strong natural appetites and domestic ease, 1 Tim. v. 8. Weeds and wild beasts war against the indolent. It is wise to moralize upon the clear effects of vice, chap. vi. 10, 11.



C H A P. XXV.

THESE *following* are also Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, *one of his most religious successors*, copied out * *from amongst his other valuable writings*.

Proverbs. These short sayings of Solomon refer to most momentous subjects. Kings ought to have their subjects as much improved as possible, 2 Chron xxi. 31.

It is the glory of God, *whose government is* 2 *universal*, to conceal a thing † *from numbers*, till their minds are advanced; but the chief honour of kings is to search out a matter of *right and sound policy*.

Providence and kings. God, as wise and good to his

* Compare Gen. xxvi. 22. Job. ix. 5. For that end they went about. † Put for his purposes. H.

offspring, hides not what is necessary, Rom. ii. 14, 15. Psal. xix. 7, &c. Yet the most exalted cannot find out his ways to perfection. As faculties enlarge, so will comprehension and delight, 1 John iii. 2, &c. 1 Cor. xiii. 9, &c. The high trust of rulers admits not either of their being indolent, or superficial, chap. xvi. 10. Job xxix. 21, &c. *Infinite wisdom* will be able one day to justify what is now impenetrable *R.* Laws ought to be simple, short and clear. *R.*

- 3 The heaven for height is *remarkable*, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings, compared with the multitude, is unfearchable.

Kings. Clear principles of law and equity do high honour to rulers. Contrivances for national security and strength may and ought to be more out of common reach. Faithful subjects will beware of meddling. These may be impenetrable without being false. *R.*

- 4 Take away the *impure* dross, from off the precious silver, and there shall come forth a vessel from thence, for great credit to the finer.

Diligence. Works of art are much hurt by base materials. Natural improvements lead to important spiritual ones.

- 5 Take away the *selfish* wicked, from before the king, whom he would mislead, and his throne shall be established in sure equal righteousness.

Kings. Men of eminent station have great power, Psal. xii. 8. Prov. xxix. 2. Kings cannot be every where so as to see with their own eyes. A narrow covetous temper is not for rule. Difficult charges ought rather to come as be sought for. Princes of good parts govern those who govern under them: The great art of ruling. Knaves are inventive to elude justice.

- 6 Put not forth thyself *proudly* in the presence of the king, and stand not, without a

call, in the place of great men whom he employs. For better it is, in point of honour and 7 usefulness, that it be said unto thee, Come up hither and officiate, than that thou shouldest be put lower, on account of thy effrontery, in the very presence of the prince, whom thine eyes have but lately seen.

Humility and honour. Justice ought to be impartial; and modest worth brought upon the field. Ignorance and vice are hatefully assuming. No country is so well as when merit is sought after, encouraged. They who impudently solicit will soon come to flatter and bribe. Splendid virtue is strength. To be modest is conciliating, Luke xiv. 10, &c.

Go not forth hastily to strive, when thou art 8 provoked, lest when far gone in revenge, thou know not what to do in the end thereof when thy more powerful neighbour hath put thee to open shame.

Revenge. In matters of ceremony yielding is most decent. Sacrifice a little to self-enjoyment and the public good. Great souls live far above quick resentment. Wrath is a short madness, wherein much evil may be spoken and done, Luke xii. 58.

*Debate thy cause of difference in a sober way 9 with thy suspected offending neighbour himself; and discover not before this, a secret * grudge to another. Lest he that heareth it 10 afterwards put thee to shame, and the punishment of thine infamy turn not soon away.*

Quietness and revenge. Make sure of the goodness of thy claim; and then apply for redress after a meek manner. In rage beware of revealing what should be kept

* Or, the secret. H.

secret, for which there can be no excuse. It is cruel, treacherous.

- 11 *Even a word fitly spoken, and as upon wheels, is for beauty, as well as for profit, like apples of gold * set in frame to pictures of silver.*

Seasonable words. The meek and lowly heart is open to advice and moderate, Psal. cxli. 3, 4. Wise speech points to its proper end. What is rare we most admire. Splendour and just proportion together do captivate all. Let occasion and manner be studied, Eph. iv. 29. Col. iv. 6. Age and experience ought ever to preside. R.

- 12 *As an ear-ring of gold smoothly polished, and an ornament of fine gold, so attractive is the word of a wise reprover upon an upright obedient ear.*

Reproof. Beauty and dress do mutually affect. A willing learner is desirous of every proper mean. One who pities and corrects with judgement is a credit and blessing to human nature. Next to him is a mind ever open to conviction, 2 Tim. ii. 25, &c.

- 13 *As the cold of winter-snow † kept for mixing with water, in the busy time of harvest, so is a faithful acting messenger to them that send him; for he by success refresheth like treasured drink, the soul of his masters.*

Faithful service. Works of labour require special supports. Where climates are warm even fountain waters should be helped. Wise orders ought to be punctually executed. Inattention of servants is real disobedience, Col. iv. 1.

- 14 *Who so boasteth himself of a false gift, which he never did intend, is like disappointing*

* Or, set in baskets. H. Isa. ii. 16. A sentiment expressed with propriety. † Kept by means of some hollow vessel, 2 Chron. xxv. 5. Psal. xxxv. 2. A custom which still obtains in the east.

clouds in drought of summer and wind which seems to promise more, yet without rain.

Gifts. To appear full of liberal designs and not to execute is cruel self-convicted mockery of want, Jam. ii. 15, 16. 1 John iii. 15. To raise hope and aggravate wretchedness is bitter evil; like that of lowring weather with barren wind, Jude 12. 2 Pet. ii. 17.

By long and patient forbearing to complain 15
is even a prince persuaded, who has taken offence,
and a soft use of the tongue in self-vindication
breaketh the heart, which was hard as a * bone.

Mild forbearance. When passion subsides reason is hearkened unto. A degree of veneration is due to rank. To bear and forbear are chief rules of religion. Malice itself may be overcome with good. Politeness is common to delicate souls. R.

Hast thou found delicious honey? Eat so 16
much, and no more, as is sufficient for thee,
lest otherwise thou be filled therewith beyond
measure, and vomit it under no small pain and
danger both.

Health. Gratitude and moderation are to be used in our meals. Sociality requires us to be pleased, but not to exceed. Let all have their share. Disgust not the sober, chap. xxiii. 1, 10. Temperance and exercise prevent enfeebling, ver. 2. R.

Withdraw thy foot from too frequent fami- 17
liar visits in thy neighbour's house: lest he be
weary of thee, and so at length, come to hate
thee.

Visits. It is prudent and beneficial to be sparing. Some from warmth of temper may invite too strong. Give and receive so as to keep up the hospitable temper.

* Compare Gen. xlix. 14. H.

- 18 A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is *more cruel to him, than by the use of a heavy maul, and a sword itself, and a sharp full aimed arrow.*

False witnessing. Truth is the bond of society. To swear contrary to conviction is the most base, cruel and impious of all falsehoods. What can stand before it? Psal. cxx. 3, 4.

Dispose us, O thou *fountain of love*, according to the direction of wisdom, to do right and kindness to ourselves, by doing right and kindness to others; endearing them to us, and thereby securing all that which friendship and love in them can do for us: and let us not by provoking and exasperating them, through the practice of falsehood, injustice and cruelty, engage them to do us all the mischief, (even in their own defence) which their understanding can contrive, and their power can effect!

- 19 Confidence in an unfaithful *promising* man in time of trouble, is *vexatious* like a new broken tooth, and a * foot out of joint.

Promises. Some obligations are natural and others positive. Bargains and promises of friendly redress mitigate the evils of life; and cruel disappointment heightens them.

- 20 As he that taketh away a *necessary* garment in cold weather, and as *sharp* vinegar upon nitre, *which sets it a working*; so is he that singeth songs to an *afflicted* heavy heart.

Mercy. Dress, which one cannot live without, is hard to spare, and may prove mortal if taken. Heighten not distress; but speak of sorrow to the afflicted, and weep with them. Prayers, silence and tears go wondrous lengths, Job ii. 12, 13. Reverence is due to grief, Eccles. xxii. 6. Psal. cxxxvii. 3. Compassion melts into anguish without being able to answer. R.

* Or, *sprained*. H.

If thine *hating enemy to thy certain knowledge* 21
 be hungry, give him * bread to eat : and if
 he be thirsty, give him water to drink. For 22
thus thou shalt as in a censer, heap coals of
gently softening fire upon his head, so as to con-
ciliate, and the Lord of infinite goodness shall in
an ample manner † reward thee.

Forgiveness. Where love of esteem cannot be exercised,
 that of compassion is the more due, Matth. v. 43, &c.
 To preserve life we ought to use every kind of mean,
 Deut. xxii. 1, &c. Ex. xxiii. 4, 5. Either give up with
 religion or revenge, Rom. xii. 20, &c. The fire of love,
 and the heat of good works, who can resist ? Think of
 Joseph and his brethren. Likewise 1 Sam. xxiv. 15, &c.
 Prov. xx. 22, 24. Above all the example of *Christ*.
 Mankind are but one family, whereof *God* is the com-
 mon father. *R.* Enemies are still men when they are van-
 quished. *R.* The right of conquest is the least of any. *R.*

The † north wind *in common* driveth away 23
heavy clouds of rain ; so doth an angry coun-
tenance, when shewed with judgement against a
backbiting slanderous tongue.

Backbiting. Temptations to revenge should not be
 hastily yielded to. It is brave and beneficial to oppose
 slanders. Give seasonable checks to distant, cruel hints,
 suspicious signs and phrases. Anger at times, may not
 only be innocent, but praise-worthy, and even humane.
 Such melt and weep at heart. Lies and misrepresenta-
 tions gather clouds of miserable guilt.

It is better *for safety and ease, to dwell in a* 24
secret narrow corner of the house-top, than

* Put for food of every kind. *H.* † Or accept the peace-
 offerings of thee, Ex. xxvii. 3. Lev. xvi. 12. Amos v. 22.
 † Moisture exhaled from Southern heat, an opposite strong
 wind is fittest to disperse.

with a *fierce* brawling woman, and in a wide elegant, well furnished house.

Domestic peace. Open female rage is a fore disappointment to genuine love, chap. xxi. 9. Calm self-possession is preferable to every outward convenience. Married women given to passion disgrace the honourable state. Strive to see every thing in a pleasing light. Love from this is the essence of domestic felicity, Psal. cxxxiii. 1. 1 Pet. iii. 1, &c.

- 25 As cold * waters *refreshing* to a thirsty soul: so is good news brought from a far country.

Good news. Blessings do rise in value to the need we have of them, and the difficulty of their acquisition. What is common we are apt to overlook.

- 26 A righteous man falling down to supplicate before the wicked oppressor is painful to witness as a troubled fountain of good water, and even as a corrupt pestive † spring.

Oppression. The liberal heart is a public extensive good. A short space of severe suffering appears long. Offices that are high bind to be generous, chap. ix. 2. Hab. i. 2, &c. Eccl. iv. 1, 2.

Make us wise, O Lord, by the knowledge and belief of the last amazing issue of things; and help us so to live, that we may be numbered among the righteous, at that day when all those distinctions of men which are peculiar to this world shall cease: and when there shall be no other difference, but what is made by their obedience, or disobedience, their righteousness or unrighteousness.

- 27 It is not good for health, to eat much honey at once; so for † men to search out with eagerness their own glory, is not real glory.

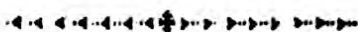
* In a land of few springs what a comfort is water? Such is friendship in a world like ours. Absence is like a touchstone to what is real, 3 John 4. Acts xi. 23. † Rather stream from thence. H. ‡ Some, but in deeds of virtue to exceed is glorious. H.

Glory. What in moderation is pleasant and friendly hurts by excess. Motives and means of virtue from this world should not be our chief end, Matth. vi. 1, &c. 1 Cor. iv. 3, &c. Be not insensible to praise; but love to deserve it. *R.*

He that hath no *proper rule over the desires* 28
of his own spirit is *exposed to reproach and ruin*
like a *fortified city* that is broken down by *in-*
vaders, and without *sufficient walls of defence.*

Self-government. Let reason keep the throne, and inferior appetites obey, Gal. v. 19, &c. Prov. xvi. 32.

Thou hast laid, *O Lord*, the foundation of our happiness in religion; to live according to our constitution and frame, according to the nature of things, and thy own unchangeable moral excellencies.



C H A P. XXVI.

AS snow is vexatious in midst of summer, 1
and as rain also is in the busy weeks of
harvest: so an improper mark of honour is not
seemly for a weak wicked fool.

The essence of wisdom is to know and do well, Eccl. ii. 14. Fools have no fixed purpose in life, ver. 13. Grievous effects cannot be observed with ease, Eccl. x. 16, 17. Qualities alone ought to influence public leaders, Eccl. iv. 1, &c. 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, &c.

As the * bird gives no offence by wandering, 2
and as the † swallow in particular prejudices not

* Some, sparrow when it sporteth, Psal. lxxxiv. 3. *H.*
† Others, ring-dove, when it rangeth. *H.*

by flying, so the curse causeless of a bitter enemy shall not come to pass.

Wrathful cursing. In passion the tongue is not easily guided, Jam. i. 27.—iii 10, &c. No cause whatsoever will justify horrid oaths, or imprecations. Pity is due unto such.

- 3 A whip *at times is needed* for the horse, a bridle for the *more insensible* ass, and *in like manner* a chastening rod for the *wicked fool's* back.

Correction. Indolence and stubbornness mark extreme vice. Mild arguments will not do with some. Well proportioned chastisements are favours in the main. Pests of society must be sought out and punished.

- 4 Answer not a *vain ignorant* fool according to his folly, lest thou also be found like unto him *in rashness*.
5 Answer a *more subtle evil minded* fool according to his *severe methods of* folly, lest he be *more wise* in his own conceit *than ever*.

Answers. They who weakly imagine affronts scarce deserve a return; but least of all in their own way. Real merit has enough in themselves to answer them. A moment's silence, or two, obtains complete victory. Upbraiding artful methods ought to be checked by close arguments. Some are weak, yet ingenuous; others weak and proud.

- 6 He that sendeth a message of importance, by the hand of a *stupid drunken* fool * is *injurious to himself as one who* cutteth off the *necessary feet* for execution, and drinketh up damage of violence to credit, fortune and life in abundance.

Messengers. Want of knowledge and conscience must

* Compare Job xv. 16. H.

prove unfaithful. It is hard to be disappointed by those whom we subſiſt. Fidelity, as before *God*, is a devout exerciſe. The reverſe is injuſtice and ingratitude.

The legs of the lame are not equal, *therefore* 7
not ſeemly to walk with ; ſo is a parable of excel-
lent import in the mouth of *weak* fools, *who*
can neither explain nor apply them.

Parable, or fine words. Beautiful ſentences require much ſkill both of men and affairs. Their appoſiteness doth conſtitute their value. Decline oſtentation by borrowed words and ſentences. Such are ſoon found out and hated. Better to be ſilent. Private converſing diſcovers the real man.

As * he that bindeth up a ſtone in a ſling 8
has no power to hit ; ſo is he of no uſe to the
public that giveth places of honour and truſt to
a vicious ignorant fool.

Honour and truſt. Diſgrace ſoon ſucceeds to injudi-
cious exaltation. There is danger from them to the
promoter.

As a thorn from ſevere falls goeth up deep 9
into the hand of a drunkard, and makes him
diſagreeably loud, ſo is a † parable of good bene-
ficial import in the mouth of *ignorant miſapply-*
ing fools.

Parables. The uſeful effects of knowledge are its
glory, ver. x. 11. Good words from the wicked hurt
themſelves and others.

The great ‡ God that formed all things, 10
both rewardeth the *evil acting* fool with con-
dign puniſhment, and rewardeth yet more dread-
fully the bold incorrigible tranſgreſſors.

* Some, as he who adds a precious ſtone to a common
heap. H. † Or, fine word. ‡ Some, the great wiſe maſter
doth all things well, who both rewardeth, &c.

Punishments of vice. Words uttered without due thought must be hurtful. Certain vices are their own reproach. The worst of all folly is high trust abused, Psal. xii. 8.

Suffer us not, *O God*, to deceive and impose upon ourselves any longer, by such false suppositions as tend only to gratify the enemy of our souls, and to make us utterly incapable of thee, and of our own proper and only happiness! Grant that now, before it be too late, we may wisely and steadfastly resolve to set upon the great business we have to do here in time; that so we may redeem what is past, and ourselves from being lost for ever!

- 11 As a dog by over-eating, returneth to his vomit for ease; so a wicked irreclaimable fool returneth after frequent strong convictions, to the repeating of his folly.

Conviction. Where there is little sense to work upon, resolutions will be weak; but hope itself ceaseth, when modesty and self-tortures are overcome. Appetites long gratified crave with increasing violence. Be courageous and seek grace. Fear prejudices, appearances and passion.

We have called upon thee, *our God*, for that help which is never wanting, as if that were the only thing we stood in need of, and we did not make use of the vigour which thou hadst put into our spirits, by conviction of our judgements, and the working of our conscience, for the recovery of our reasonable nature, in subserviency to thee, and depending upon thee, who dost always accompany our endeavours with thy assistance for our good.

- 12 Seest thou a man that is wise in his own conceit; there is more hope of good even from a modest well meaning fool, than of him.

Self-conceit. The lowly meek may be persuaded. The proud never can, Matth. xi. 25. Sensibility of weakness leads to earnest successful petitioning, Matth. vi. 7. Formalists are most liable to conceit.

- 13 The slothful man saith to excuse himself,

There is a *destroying* lion in the way; a lion is got loose in the very streets.

Sloth. Indolence fabricates the most ridiculous and numerous apologies, ver. 16. Therefore grows fast upon human nature.

As the door turneth *back and forward* upon 14
his *fixed* hinges, *without advancing*; so doth the
slothful *loiterer* upon his *warm* bed.

Sloth. The idle reflect, wish and hope to awake; yet rise not in time to work. A habit of delaying is most hazardous.

In the day of our repentance, *O God*, we have resolved according to the reason of things, and the laws of our religion; and again in the day of our temptation, we have acted according to our vicious inclinations and habits.

The *same* slothful man hideth his *cold* hand 15
in his bosom, and it grieveth him *like one*
wearied with severe labour, to bring it again
from thence to his mouth, *which next to involuntarily opens for food*.

Sloth. Frequent breach of purpose becometh like one dead to action. It is slavery of the most debasing ruinous kind.

And to complete both wretchedness and guilt, 16
the *stupid* sluggard, *so long spoken of*, is wiser in
his own conceit, *for devising means of increase to*
such pestive disorder, than seven *chosen* men,
that can render a good sufficient reason for wise
behaviour.

Sloth. Wishes may be serious and yet not effectual, from want of instant execution, chap. xix. 24.—xxii. 13. Such must be self-condemned.

He that passeth by *, and meddleth in

* See Num. xxii. 18, 6. H.

officious busied rage with strife, belonging not immediately to him, is like one for hazard, that taketh a strong mastiff dog by the ears and hurts him.

Strife. It shews a strange disposition to court danger and to suffer from it. Those who follow no honest employment are the great meddlers.

- 18 As a furious mad man who casteth every where around him flaming fire-brands at one time, sharp pointed arrows at another, and similar dreadful instruments of death: So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour by what is specious to great hurt, and faith, when all is over, Am not I in sport?

Mischievous diversion. Lying in all shapes is base and culpable. Trifle not with sacred truth, the bond of society. Dread severe wit. Spoil not mirth by what gives another pain.

- 20 Where no dried wood is for fuel, there the fire goeth out; so where there is no whispering tale-bearer the one principal cause of strife ceaseth.

Tale-bearing. The most awful Scripture passages do not always intimidate even some religious professors, Psalms l. 16. Commonness of crimes does not lessen the malignancy of them. Treachery and evil speaking are often conjoined. Arrows shot in the dark are peculiarly base: Rom. xvi. 17. Some live upon blood, and the stench of disease, Prov. xvii. 14, &c.

- 21 As coals are an addition of heat to burning coals, and wood to a slow fire: so is a contentious man to kindle severe strife.

Strife. Be not quick to take provocation, or to execute revenge. Open hatred is preferable to secret undermining. Put not the worst construction upon things.

Learn to suffer small losses. Good temper is a noble useful ornament, Jam. iii. 14, 15. 1 Pet. iii. 2, &c.

The words of a talebearer, *who affects* 22
friendship, are as *painful wounds*; and they go
down for *deadly torture* into the innermost
vital parts of the belly.

Talebearing. Dread those who are talkative. Smooth hypocrites draw out secrets to hurt, Eccl. xxviii. 13, &c. To ruin innocent characters is cruel murder. Make not even bad things worse. Weep over faults.

Discordant * burning lips, and a wicked
cruel heart, which leads to this, are like a hot
pot-herd, covered with *bright silver melting*
out of dross.

Discord and cruelty. Specious lies kindle devouring flames. False varnish doth not long stand the test. Disappoint not confidence; reveal no secrets; betray not the freedoms of an unguarded hour.

He that *cruelly* hateth dissembleth 24
often with the soft speech of his lips; and
layeth up, as a *treasure, store* of deceit within
him. When he speaketh fair, believe him 25
not to be in earnest, so as to trust, for there are
† seven hideous abominations of mischief in his
heart. Whose mortal hatred is covered by 26
plausible deceit; and his *secret implacable wickedness*
shall be shewn in full light before the
whole congregation.

Deceit. Revenge unexpected is the more dreadful. Be not rash to judge amiss, nor yet to trust. Criminal artifices will be laid open, 1 Cor. iv. 5, &c. by flames of fiery wrath.

* Some, friendly signs, and a base heart H. Compare, Lev. xxvi. 28. H. † Put for many; Gen. xli. 29. Job. xxx. 33. Zeph. i. 15. Prov. xxvii. 16.—xxiv. 16.

long soever our lives may prove ; that in the end of our days we may attain the end of our religion, and the happiness of our souls, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let another man *have leave to praise thee,* 2
and not thine own mouth ; a stranger *justly*
pleased with thee in the main, and not thine
own proud lips.

Praise and Vanity. Be not lifted up, even where success has been agreeable to expectation, Rom. xii. 3. Jam. i. 17. The desire of fame is reasonable, though not as a chief end, Rom. xiv. 18. Phil. iv. 8. Dread strong self complacency, even in good works. The praise of discernment is true praise. Modest youth is timorous.

A stone is heavy, and the sand *when collected* 3
is weighty ; but a *rash wicked* fool's wrath
is heavier to bear than them both.

Wrath of fools. A wise man is put into anger, only from inadvertence, or great provocation. It is the glory of a man to keep this at under. Wise argument has no good effect upon rage, which aggravates both guilt and punishment.

Sudden wrath is frequently cruel, and blown 4
up to settled anger is outrageous ; but who is
able to stand before *the malignant spirit of en-*
vy at another's good ?

Wrath, anger and envy. The fretful and peevish are difficult to live with. Still more, they who are implacably resentive. Yet, time and patience, under God, may cure both. Not so the malicious vice, that pines at excellence. They do little good who are not envied. Fair virtue may have its blemishes, which this evil spirit is sure to tax, under appearance of hating guilt. Some act invidiously, Jam iii. 13, &c. Chastise faults, and spare the transgressor, 1 John iii. 9, &c.

Open free rebuke *when needful* is better for 5
human profit, than secret timid love. Faithful 6

to true affection are the wounds of *smart advice* from a *sincere* friend: but the *kisses* of an enemy *at heart* are deceitful, *as jealousy itself*.

Rebuke, fidelity, friendship. Mutual angry reviling is quite incompatible with friendship. Honest warmth is resolute and prudent, both as to times and manners. Conviction of wrong is not separable from pain, Lev. xix. 17 Math xviii 15. Smooth not over faults with fair names. Let love be without dissimulation.

- 7 The full soul *from eating* loatheth *even the sweetness* of an honey-comb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing *of food kind* is sweet.

Want. How apt are men to despise common necessary blessings? What all need, and many have, are of the greatest moment. Superfluities are soon loathed. Wholesome exercise and lawful industry relish plain living; so doth strong ingenuous spiritual appetite.

- 8 As a bird *is in danger* that wandereth from her nest: so is a man *to suffer want*, that wandereth from *the duties of** his place.

Official Duties. To bound desire is the way to be rich, Prov. xxxvii. 16. A constant course of luxurious living mars its own end. How many hazards do people run abroad, for what might easier and better be found at home? Wanton prodigality tempts to rove. A competency among friends is true secular wealth. Determine not hastily in an employment for life, and take advice. Act with firmness, and seek to excel. Variety of projects divides attention and time too much.

- 9 Soft† ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's
10 friend by *wise* hearty counsel. Thine own

* Or, *who deserteth his home. H.*
of fragrance arrest both sight and smell.

† *Certain means*

*experienced friend, and thy father's friend forsake not, on account of mere upstarts; * neither go into thy brother's house, which thou hast long avoided, in the day of thy calamity: for better is a loving neighbour that is near, though otherwise unrelated, than a brother-german far off.*

Friendship and relation. The sacred tie is restorative, has joys and sorrows in common to increase the one, and divide the other. Even fine sentiments relish most among kindred spirits. The very look of a judicious intimate instructs and comforts. Doubtful, dangerous circumstances, try true love. All aids ought to be hearty. Age, with experience, bind doubly strong. Reserve wounds true affection, and distrust kills it. A friend and a brother in one is the chief of human joys. Mere blood connection is but a nominal tie. Certain natures will run half naked to assist, when kindred must take time to dress and to prepare. *Hesiod. Prov. xvii. 17.—18. 24.* Choose friends leisurely, and cherish them. Essential qualities in such ought to be, judgement, uprightness, constance, deliberation, experience.

My dear son, be wise in behaviour, and make my heart ever glad to see or hear of thee, that I may also have an answer in readiness, for him that reproacheth me, when it is in his power. 11

Wise children Much depends upon a good beginning, and virtuous associates. To see instruction prosper is the height of parental joy. Beseeching from one in authority has great power. Confederate not with the foes of kind parents, *Psal. cxxvii. 5.*

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and, as much as possible, hideth himself from it; but 12

** Or, and thou shalt not have, to go into thy brother's house, in the day of thy calamity. H.*

the *weak credulous simple* pass *forwardly* on, and are punished *often to a great degree*.

Youthful prudence. Rashness is most incident to early life, from ignorance of men and things. To believe that one may err, and to advise, are happy dispositions. Fear and trembling suit the nature of our probation state. He who foresees unavoidable danger, and dares to look it in the face, is truly brave, chap. xxii. 3.

- 13 Take his garment *in pledge*, that is surety for a stranger, and take a *still more valuable* pledge of him for *warranting* a strange loose woman.

Suretyship. The utmost that law admits expresses strong obligation. A dissolute life in females argues entire want of principle, chap. xx. 13.

- 14 He that *hypocritically* blesteth his *rich* friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning *for this end*; it shall in time be counted *meanness* with * a heavy curse to him.

Flattery. False bare-faced compliments soon become odious. They tend to mislead and bring on ruin. Hardly can such escape.

- 15 A continual *roof-dropping* in a very rainy day, and a *passionate* contentious woman are alike *grievous*.

Domestic quarrelling. Incessant clamour from one's nearest relative is absolutely shocking. The scorn of unpitying neighbours, Prov. xix. 13.

- 16 Whosoever † hideth her, by any lawful means *he can think of*, hideth *what may be compared to* the eluding wind, and the squeezed soft oint-

* Compare 1 Sam. ii. 30. † They who can conceal, can conceal a scent; but the perfume in a man's hand will discover itself. Compare Lev. xxv. 10. Deut. xx. 16. H.

ment of his right hand, which *obviously* bewrayeth itself *through the fingers*.

Domestic quarrelling. Both parties are heard where neither of them are seen. They cannot hide. Common prudence should lead to be moderate. ver. 15.

Iron sharpeneth * iron, *by rubbing*; so a man 17
of pure love † sharpeneth the *very* countenance
of his friend.

Friendship. The value of choice connections is inestimable, Eccl. iv. 9. They awaken all the natural powers to free exercise. Most people are in part what their intimates are. Emulation becomes mutual. They mollify anguish. R. Where a sympathy of sentiments prepare the way, strict friendships are soon formed.

Who so keepeth the fig-tree *in good training*, 18
shall eat of the fruit thereof *abundantly*; so he
that waiteth *close* on his master *for service*,
shall *through time* be *greatly* honoured.

Servants. Fidelity, like most other duties, has an immediate recompence. Even the best of fruit-trees do not bear all at once. Merit is seldom unrewarded. Servants who love change are not often engaging.

As in water, *when nigh looked upon*, face an- 19
swereth to face: so the heart of ‡ man *in one*
age or country to man.

Human nature. The principal lines and characters of mankind are much the same. Like reasonings, or motives, therefore, may be used. Outward acts determine the inward state, Matth. vii. 15, &c. History of course must prove beneficial, Deut. xxxii. 7, 8. 1 Cor. x. 11. We are all united to the deity.

The grave of hell and bodily destruction, lead- 20

* Or, *brighteneth. H.* † *Brighteneth. H.* ‡ Or, *so doth the heart, the man to the man, viz. represent. A man's heart may be frequently known by his look.*

*ing down to this, are never full: so the * eyes of man are never satisfied with seeking after novelties.*

Desires. Not a day but death has his millions. Coveting is quite insatiable. Desires grow by indulgence, Eccl. iv. 7, 8.—v. 10, &c. Imaginary want is ever pinching. Man is immortal on account of his principle. R.

- 21 . As the fining pot is for the good of silver, to purge away dross, and the heated furnace for benefit of choice gold, † so is a man to the obtaining of his just praise.

Praise from men. Virtue rises in zeal by every opposition. Smaller degrees become too much elated and melt away to nothing. The best are bound to a circumspect walk. Be not forward either to praise or dispraise, chap. xxviii. 4.—xxix. 27. Eccl. xxvii. 6.

- 22 Though thou shouldest bray a fool of age, in a mortar among wheat with a pestle; yet will not his weak wicked foolishness depart from him.

Habits. No power less than supernatural can amend those who neglect and despise correction itself, Isa. i. 5. Jer. vi. 23, &c. Young minds ought to be very docile. Wise parents and governors instruct with patience.

- 23 Be thou diligent to know, as by their faces, the real state of thy flocks; and look both well
24 and often to thy different kind of herds. For the strength of such riches are not ensured to thee for ever; and doth the crown itself endure
25 to every successive generation? The crop for

* Put for his desires. † Or, such is a man to the mouth of the person who praiseth him. H. Matth. vii. 15, &c.
‡ Or, chastise him, as in the grinding-house, Prov. i. 17.—xxii. 24. 2 Sam. xvii. 19. Gen. xlv. 12. Ex. xii. 29. Judg. xvi. 21. H.

hay appeareth *only in its season*, and the tender
grass sheweth itself, *in forerunning sign of this*
agreeable harvest; and the herbs of the moun-
tains too, *for nice delicates and medicine*, are ga-
thered *in their appointed times*. The soft fleecy 26
lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats *by*
their produce are to defray the price of the field.
And thus watchful of trusts, with opportunities, 27
thou shalt have goats' milk enough for thy
food, for the food of thy whole household,
and for the cheering maintenance for thy nume-
rous young maidens.

Care and diligence. The best of all wealth, are flocks and herds. In proportion to hazards of loss ought our concern and industry to be. A master's own eye is his best servant. Quantity and kinds of pasturage are to be considered. The first purchase doth not establish possession; but prudent after care. Want of economy will ruin the most opulent estates. Provide for uncertainties. Seek the fittest times. Sweet is the simple state of nature.



CHAP. XXVIII.

THE *conscious* wicked flee when no man
pursueth; but the *sincere fervent* right-
teous are bold in times of great hazard as a lion.

Fortitude. Vice has no stay in danger, no support in trouble, and least of all in death. Criminal levities may silence for a time, but exasperate afterwards, Lev. xxvi. 36. Good intentions, with upright conduct, are the sum of all virtue. God will ever befriend such. How re-

spectable a thing is true Christian goodness! Prudence and courage surmount all obstacles. *R.*

- 2 For * the *abounding* transgression of a land, many are the *divided* ruling princes thereof; but by a *single* man of understanding *at times*, and *well applied* knowledge, the itate thereof shall be prolonged.

National safety. The greatest confusion must ensue where the bulk of a nation seek their own things only. Various and powerful headed factions portend the worst effects. Likewise instability of counsel and execution, Jer. xviii. 7, 8. In the worst of times one of eminence will often be attended to and succeed.

- 3 A poor man *vested with authority* † that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping *flood after rain* which leaveth no *harvest* food upon the ground.

Oppression. Base minds elated conceive the chief honour of power to lie in depressing their inferiors, Eccl. x. 5, 6, 7. Want of sense to judge, and pity to feel, is an extreme curse to a country.

- 4 They that forsake the law, *as a rule of life*, praise the wicked *by their example and support in order to conceal themselves*; but such as obediently keep the law, contend with them as enemies, for their amendment or overthrow.

Examples good and bad. However wicked men are, they love the appearance of consistency and self-vindication. The very sight of goodness reproaches sinners and provokes them. *God's* glory and the good of man-

* Or, by rebellion in a land, tyrants shall become its rulers; but where a people are wise, an able prince shall reign long. Compare Prov. xxvi. 10. 2 Kings xxv. 8. Esth. i. 8. 2 Kings iii. 7. Deut. vi. 2. H. † Compare Psal. ciii. 11. Isa. xlii. 13.

kind require that vice should be opposed. Win by mildness if possible, if not correct.

Qualify us, *O thou father of the spirits of all flesh*, by a vigorous exercise of our faculties, and by the constancy of our actions agreeable to divine virtue, and our holy religion, to return to the due order of nature; the establishment of holiness and goodness, which is our connatural subjection to thy all-perfect government.

Evil men understand not *the excellence and necessity of just judgement*: but they that *piously seek the Lord understand it, with all other needful things*. 5

True wisdom. A habit of wickedness blinds the intellect and hardens. Upright souls will not be allowed finally and fatally to err, Psal. lxxxiv. 11.—xxv. 9, &c. John vii. 17. A model too perfect is hated by the vicious. *R.* God is the cause and source of truth. His precepts are the transcripts of his own moral attributes. We can be valuable upon nothing so much as resembling these.

Better is the poor, *as to outward condition*, that walketh *through life* in his uprightness of behaviour, than he that is *designedly* perverse in his ways of conduct, though he be *externally* rich. 6

Uprightness and peace. Perseverance is essential to well-doing. Riches acquired by undue means do not reflect upon with ease. Few attain the length of clear ample restitution.

Cause us, *O good God*, to live up to the peculiar excellence of our nature in the right use of our faculties and government of ourselves by our supreme powers; and suffer us not to live below, and contrary to our nature, through gross neglect, and shameful abuse of our faculties; enslaving our souls to our bodies, and becoming like the beasts that have no rational understanding!

Who so keepeth the *written law of heaven* is a wise son to his parents, *state and church*; 7

but he who is a *flattering* companion of riotous men shameth his father, *who had the trust of educating him.*

Children good and bad. Knowledge and practice ought to keep pace with each other. Withdraw from places and companies where there is greatest temptations. What object so sweet to look upon, or to hear about, as a well-doing child? Moderate animal living gives time and heart to noble spiritual employments; whereas riotous living ruins name, fortune and happiness. No grief or confusion can equal that of a disappointed parent, from a bad son. Education obliges children to gratitude; and these are the original bonds of society. *R.* The country is nothing else than many families united. *R.*

- 8 He that by *extravagant* usury and unjust gain of any kind increaseth his substance, he shall, *unknown to himself*, gather it for him that will pity and aid the poor.

Riches. For peculiar wise reasons under the law, taking interest for loan from a brother Israelite was prohibited, Ex. xxiv. 25. Deut. xxiii. 19, 20. It is therefore fitly ranked with injustice. To borrow for convenience may pay lawful interest. Lending in many cases is a preferable charity to giving, as what saves shame and obliges to work. Sordid avarice is a severe curse upon mankind. Pure communicative love is rarely permitted to want, Eccl. xi. 1, &c. Lev. xxv. 35, &c.

- 9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law of God read, explained, and inculcated, even his prayer in time of trouble shall be held as loathsome abomination.

Hearing God's word, and prayer. The purest and the most acceptable of all devout exercises is to imitate divine love. The worst extreme of vice is abandoned listlessness; soon followed with contempt. Prayers of the wicked are cries of terror, without esteem or love, Prov. i. 24, &c. Some only read and hear the law of God as

an end, without applying it practically. Numbers of high profession hate to be admonished, John ix. 31. 1 John iii. 24. Psal. l. 16, &c. Such give a fatal wound to devotion, 1 Tim. ii. 8. 1 John i. 5, 6.

Teach thou us, *O Lord*, to value it as our privilege, that setting aside from time to time, all worldly employments and concernments, we can join together in such exercises, and receive such impressions from thence, as casts our thoughts into a frame which is purely heavenly and divine!

Who so by *subtle arts* * causeth the righteous to go astray in an *unforeseen* evil way, he shall fall miserably himself into the *designed mischiefs* of his own pit; but the *prudent and steadfastly* upright shall have good things in long possession. 10

Uprightness and seduction. The sincere may not in many cases have a large degree of understanding. Their very simplicity and goodness of heart, at times, shuts their eyes from discernment of artful measures. A seducer seldom fails of being caught in his own snare, Psal. vii. 14, &c. By the natural tendency of things, the good succeed, and *God* is with them. Their stores are unstained by guilty purchases. Their desires are moderate. They enjoy much in little. That which appears to be virtue is sometimes nothing, but a deceitful mask. R.

Alienate our minds, *great God*, upon rational conviction, from the sinful customs and principles of this mad, degenerate and apostate world; that we may never be led away by the error of the wicked and forsake thee and our own mercies!

The rich man is *often* wise in his own conceit, so as to overbear, to dictate; but the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out, so thoroughly as to be able to expose him. 11

* Or, enticeth. H.

Rich and poor. Money alone gives confidence to great numbers. Their forwardness is seldom blamed in company, which renders them still more assuming. Natural good sense sees folly in disguise, and seeks to become intimate with the judicious, 1 Kings iii. 9, &c. To court mere external grandeur is a mark of perverted taste however common, Eccl. vii. 11, 12.

- 12 When righteous men do prosper so as to rejoice, there is great glory given to worth; but when the wicked rise into high place by wealth, a man of sense retires, and is hidden.

Promotion. Principle, sound judgement, and ability to execute, are essential qualities for governing. It is pure lasting satisfaction to see people treated according to merit, Psal. xii. 8. Prov. xxix. 2.

We bless thee, great and good God, who hast made us one for another; and that by the practice of all goodness, righteousness and truth, the wisdom and strength of the whole is increased: so that the more valuable men there are in the world, so much the better it is for all that live in it; because from those nothing is to be feared which they can hinder, and every thing may be expected which they can do.

- 13 He that covereth his sins, as much as may be even from his own view, and does not humbly own them to his Maker, shall not religiously prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have sure, eternal mercy. Happy is the man that trusting to such clear promises, feareth alway afterwards to offend against them; but he that hardeneth his heart by criminal practices, shall fall into sore irretrievable mischief.

Confession of sin, and subsequent fear. They deliberately cover sins who wish not to know and become penitent. What is necessary to reparation must not be hid. Godly sorrow and acknowledging, lead to amendment. Di-

vine love hath left no room for despair. Solid signs of reformation are diffidence, watchfulness and circumspection. They who are careless and obstinate shut out grace.

We confess with shame, *O Lord*, that we have violated thy laws, which are no other than the laws of our nature; and that rule of everlasting righteousness, which is the life of the universe. In thus forsaking thee, we have forsaken our own mercies, and must be miserable, until we undo by repentance, what we have ill done by sin; and be reconciled in our temper to that righteousness, which is the nature, mind and will of *God*. Enable us, *thou fountain of life*, to believe the remission of sins, with comfort and steadfastness; to trust in thee, through *Christ Jesus*, for all that mercy, which, as penitent sinners, we stand in need of! Grant us now, without delay, to make a right use of our faculties, justly to value our true and greatest interest; and, as we can remember what is past, and foresee what is to come, so to charge ourselves with the necessary care of our salvation, and effectually to provide for that eternity, in which we must be unavoidably most happy, or most miserable.

As a *dreadful* roaring lion, and a *fierce* ranging bear, so is a wicked *oppressive* ruler over the poor *impotent* people. 15

Oppression. Fidelity in power, and cheerful submission, determine public happiness. Abuse of office provokes and issues in ruinous mischief. Bosom foes are the worst of all others. It is a terrible state to live by the dread of cruelty, rather than by affection. The worst of rulers have the most corrupted courts for joint devouring. Law is superior to majesty. Petty deputed tyrants suck blood as they are able, 1 Pet. iii. 7.

The prince that wanteth understanding is also, *with less criminal design*, a great oppressor; but he that hateth *exacting* covetousness, shall prolong his *quiet, happy* days. 16

Covetousness and oppression. They are ignorant of the

real value of things, who are fond of amassing! Oppression sinks the spirits and unfits for common necessary defence. The benefit of wealth lies in its application. Strength, freedom and property, intimidate public foes. The length or shortness of living depends upon the measure of enjoyment, Heb. xiii. 5.

- 17 A * man that *purposely* doeth violence to the blood of any *innocent* person, shall flee to the pit of his own overthrow, let no man stay him from thence, after so foul a deed.

Murder. Premeditated murder is the summit of cruelty, Psal. v. 7. Revenge and covetousness make quick haste to ruin. That man's life is ill spared who wilfully slays another, Gen. ix. 5, 6. Ex. xxi. 14. Psal. lv. 23. It is madness and not valour to fight against God. False honour is no justifiable principle for killing.

- 18 Whoso walketh uprightly *through life* shall be saved from great and numerous mischiefs; but he that is perverse and fraudulent in his ways of dealing shall, upon discovery, fall to destruction at once.

Uprightness and cunning. To act with clear steadfast truth, is honourable and commendatory. When character is broken what becomes of success? The more that honest people are known, the more they are valued. They who tread unbeaten ways will often wander and lose themselves. The wicked fall faster than they rise. What violences do unequitable traders do to their own ease, in contriving, executing, hiding?

Although thine agency, O God, transcends not only our power, but also our understanding; and we cannot comprehend how the *Supreme Being* acts in the production, conservation and restitution of his creatures; yet we are certain of our dependence upon thee, and of thy all-sufficiency for us!

* Or, he who is tortured in his spirit for having shed blood, fleeth to the grave, lest men should seize him. Compare Deut. xxviii. 29. Isa. xxxviii. 14.

He that tilleth his land *in due season* shall 19
have plenty of *needful bread*; but he that,
when called to useful work, followeth as a *companion*
after vain *dissolute* persons, shall have
barassing poverty enough.

Industry and idleness. Husbandry is the chief of human employments; and wisely put for every other. To wait on business is the way to be subsisted. To defraud and starve a poor innocent family is consummate villany, 1 Tim. v. 8.

A faithful *acting* man shall abound with 20
blessings *for both worlds*; but he that maketh
haste to be rich, *by lawless methods*, shall not
be innocent of *manifold gross crimes*, but sink under them.

Faithfulness. The duties of our state, profession and office, are much to be studied. Disgrace and ruin bring too many wicked arts to remembrance. Fair trading is much hurt by the unfaithful. Consider engagements before they are made and scrupulously perform them. Peace of mind is more than all outward wages of iniquity. Credit and competence reward the faithful.

We profess, *O Lord*, to abandon and abhor all malice, envy and uncharitableness, and to abide in universal, and the most comprehensive good will (at least of compassion, if not complacency) with all men, friends and enemies; in gratitude for what the *Son of God* has done and suffered for us: who, through our sins are unworthy of the least good, but through him, are capable of the greatest.

To have respect of persons *in judgement* is 21
not good; for, for a piece of bread *additional*,
be he ever so rich, that man *in time* will be sure
to transgress.

Partiality. Faithfulness regards promise, with duties of station and office. To pervert a divine ordinance for justice is most malignant vice, Isa. x. 1, &c. The

slightest appearances thereof should make one tremble. Delay of doing right is in itself unrighteousness. Let generous disinterested motives ever prevail. For teachers of religion to suppress truth is dreadful, Ezek. xiii. 19, &c. Matth. v. 18, 19.

- 22 He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil *coveting* eye, and considereth not that *by some hidden curse of heaven, the poverty he so much fears* shall come upon him.

Covetousness. A niggardly envying soul may possess, but can never enjoy, chap. xxiii. 6, &c. Unjust methods of gain bring on, through time, both divine and human vengeance, Luke xii. 20. Psal. xlix. Jer. xvii. 11.

- 23 He that *seasonably and mildly* rebuketh a man of good sense in the main, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth his errors of practice with the tongue.

Flattery and rebuke. Men are apt to grow proud as they increase their substance, ver. 11. The sincere friend cannot suffer sin upon one he loves. Some choose to flatter, whilst they affect to hate it. R.

- 24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith it is no transgression, the same is the *fit familiar* companion of a *vile iniquitous* * destroyer.

Unnatural children. Thieving from friends is shocking. Why spend above what may be owned to a father or mother? Why endanger their credit and ease? Why seem to wish them out of the way before their time? Why bring on a suspicion of others? Why draw down gray hairs with sorrow to the grave?

- 25 He that is of a proud, *coveting, revengeful* heart stirreth up strife to his own undoing; but he that *patiently doing good* putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made † fat in comforts.

* Or, murderer. H. † Or, enjoy abundance. H.

Patience and revenge. Be not of a peevish, anxious, desponding spirit. Rest thy injured cause in an *unerring omnipotent God*. Expostulate without revenge. Ambitious pride is full of schemes and endeavours to rise at any one's expence, Psal. xxxiv. 9. Courage in danger is active, calm and present to itself. R.

We magnify thee, *O Lord and King of the world*, who hast assured us by the manifestations and communications of thyself, that the supremacy of the universe is in conjunction with the perfection of goodness; and that there is no malignity possible which is not subject to the controul of thee, who dost essentially abhor it.

He that trusteth in his own heart is a *vain erring* fool; but whoso walketh wisely *under directions of friendship*, he shall be delivered from manifold severe evils. 26

Diffidence and self-conceit. It is dangerous to rest in our own skill. Haite is presumptive blundering. Foresee, fear, avoid hazards.

Blessed be thou, *O God*, who, in thy wisdom, appliest thyself to the faculties of our nature, who art, notwithstanding our sole sufficiency. Therefore we work out our salvation with fear and trembling, because thou workest in us both to will and to do, according to thy good pleasure.

He that giveth *largely* unto the poor, *agreeable* to his circumstances, shall not lack by this means, but he that hideth his eyes to the utmost from human calamities, shall have many a dreadful curse. 27

Mercy. Discreet almsgiving is an essential branch of true charity. The covetous are afraid of being moved to compassion, Psal. xli. 1, &c. It is a part of our business to inquire after the troubles and wants of others; to do them good and to pray for them, Isa. xxxii. 32.—lviii. 9.

When the wicked rise into places of influence, men of the best dispositions hide themselves; 28

but when they perish *from these*, the *equitable and useful* righteous increase, and come forth.

Promotion. Be not concerned in managing with those of corrupt selfish principles. By enactment and execution of good laws, people of merit are brought forward. Understanding, with strict virtue, grace the seats of judicature, 1 Tim. ii. 1, &c. He who has been taught to practise obedience, will afterwards know how to command. R.



C H A P. XXIX.

- 1 **H**E that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, *like a stubborn resisting bullock*, shall suddenly be destroyed by his own crimes, and that without remedy.

Obstinate vice. No person all at once becometh one of the worst. Watch the first motions towards evil, and stand in awe of heart-remonstrances, Jam. i. 13, &c. Heb. iii. 13. This makes religion easy, joyous. Habit becomes a kind of second nature. To be unaffected with friendly admonition argues ungrateful obstinacy, Matth. vii. 6. Lev. xix. 17. Amos iv. 6. Isa. i. 4, 5.

Convince those of their sin, O Lord, who do that wrong to themselves, by gross neglect and profane contempt of the obligations of religion, and the means for becoming religious; and who spend that time which is consecrated to God, in the practice of vice and folly! Awaken their consciences by some astonishing event, or happy counsel, or serious consideration; that so they may in time, before they die, be prepared for it!

- 2 When the righteous are in *high* authority, the people *under them* rejoice: but when the wicked beareth *chief* rule, the *harassed* people *bitterly* mourn.

Rulers. Love and zeal for virtue are extensively profitable. The promotion of vice is cruel to thousands. Indolence itself disgraces great office, and is most injurious. An enlarged sphere of doing good is the most honourable of all distinctions. *R.*

Who so loveth *the sober rules of wisdom* rejoiceth his *instructing* father; but he that keepeth company with *abandoned* harlots, spendeth soon his *most necessary* substance. 3

Children. A sensual life is adverse to every kind of spiritual improvement, 1 Pet. ii. 11. Hof. iv. 11. Modest, ingenuous youth will be advised, Psal. cxix. 9. To grieve solicitous parents is the aggravation of all untenderness. What a contrast to meeting one another in heaven, to live for ever! Prov. iv. 5, &c.

The king by *equal* judgement establisheth the land, *both inwardly and outwardly*; but he that * receiveth gifts, to *succour a bad cause*, overthroweth it. 4

Public good. Truth ought ever to be the rule of judging; for ease to the good, and to keep the bad at under. Disaffection to the chief power must prove fatal. People lost to private and public virtue are an easy prey.

A man that flattereth his neighbour in *error and vice*, spreadeth in *effect*, a net for the *entanglement* of his feet. 5

Flattery. To delude a poor brother is fatal cruelty. Few temptations are so difficult to get the better of. Honest freedoms become wise virtuous friendships. When offence has brought on misery, advisement comes too late, Prov. xxviii. 23.

Lord God of Hosts, we acknowledge that we are eternally undone without thy pardon, and that we cannot without special assurance pretend to it; for thou art under no such obligations to offenders against thee as to

* Or, *despiseth the laws.* *H.*

give them a time and liberty to repent. Nevertheless we do not despair of thy mercy, *O good God*, since thou dost permit us to live after our sin, in a state of probation; and since there can be no interest of thee served by the perdition of a sinner, which is not better served by his repentance and salvation.

- 6 In the transgression of an evil man, there is a *concealed snare to entrap his own peace*; but the *sincere intelligent* righteous doth sing *under experienced advantages* and *exceedingly rejoice*.

Virtue and vice. No crime dares to be seen in its own proper colours, Jam. i. 13, 14. Blandished snares are the most fatal. How may the assurance of *God's love* enrapture the upright? Isa. xxxii. 17. Rom. xiv. 17, 18.

Blessed be thy name, *O God*, who, although thou didst make us no more than finite and fallible, when thou madst us men; yet hast always superintended over us by thy good spirit, which is infinite and infallible: and as in every other created nature, thou hast placed a strong principle of self-preservation and restitution, so thou hast made our nature, which is intelligent and voluntary, no less sufficient in subordination to thee, for the preservation and restoration of itself!

- 7 The *charitable* righteous considereth *with much leisure and fairness* the cause of the *real* poor; but the *niggardly* wicked regardeth not by any means *whatever*, to know it *thoroughly*.

The liberal, and illiberal. Kind offices, as to their value, depend much upon their principle and manner, chap. xxviii. 7. Men of skill ought to advocate and judge for the poor, Psal. lxxii. 4. Job xxix. 11, &c. Neglect or carelessness is next to taking a bribe.

- 8 *Profligate* scornful men, by their *contagious manners*, bring a *whole city* into a *snare of troubles*; but *wise piously disposed* men turn away *foreseen causes of wrath*.

Mildness and passion. The last stage of wickedness is to ~~scorn~~ at things of highest importance, chap. iii. 34. It is the result of pride and self-confidence. Divisions come of ridicule above most things else, Jam. iii. 5, &c. To think before one speaks argues a sound useful judgment. It is true patriotism to support religion.

If a *modest* wife man contendeth with a 9
foolish man, whether he rage *with anger*, or
laugh *in scorn*, there is no rest.

Wrath and scorning. Where a foundation of calm sense is, there only may be hope of admonishing with success. The ear discerneth not meat, the throat discerneth not words, so neither does a fool understand the sayings of a wise man. Pure zeal uses various means for amending. The easy progress of vice ought to alarm, Psal. i. 1.

The *savage* blood-thirsty hate the *opposing* 10
upright; but the *mild equitable* just seek the
esteem and comfort of his soul.

Uprightness. It is hard when the generously employed have no success, but to be hated on that account is dreadful. What some impute to rigidity is the effect of pure love. The friendship of the just is high honour.

A *weak passionate* fool uttereth all his mind, 11
in the present irritated moment; but a wise re-
flecting man keepeth it in till *some proper sea-*
son for utterance afterwards.

Haste. Judgements of consequence ought ever to be preceded by calm deliberation, Jam. i. 19. Self-conceit is rash and provoking. Be cautious in giving characters, chap. xiv. 33.—xvii. 27. They talk too much who do not hearken to others, and decide with an air of sufficiency. R.

If, from want of judgement, a ruler of the people 12
hearken to *whispered* lies, all his servants from
thence are under great temptation to become
wicked.

Rulers and servants. Examples in high life do powerfully operate, Psal. xii. 8. Jealousy is fond of uncharitable impressions, and in common never wants fools who hatch falsehoods for shewing their value. An honest courtier has little or no chance among such. Few princes hear truth, 1 Tim. ii. 1, &c.

- 13 The *upright* poor and the deceitful man often meet together in the same awful outward trials; the Lord, for wise ends, lighteneth under suffering, both their mental eyes.

Poverty and deceit. Sincere weakness is infinitely preferable to abused great gifts of the mind. The native fruits of ignorance and cruel fraud are far too late, from their not seeking and taking advice. Neither overbear nor be tamely submissive. Our chief happiness or misery must be determined by the final issues of things, Ezra ix. 8. To enjoy one's self is more than to enjoy the world.

- 14 The king that faithfully judgeth the case of the poor, his throne shall be established in the protection of heaven, and in the cordial love of his subjects for ever.

King. Invariable faithfulness constitutes sound policy, Ex. xxiii. 2, 3. Violence under shew of law is extreme falsehood. To know and act according to truth is to govern well; like God, and in his stead. Affection is a more powerful support than law.

- 15 The rod when applied with judgement, and milder reproof in its season, give good practical wisdom; but a child left to himself, without any such controul, bringeth his too indulgent mother to miserable shame.

Chastisement. Infant reason is weak and demands aid; a charge that requires both prudence and fortitude. Maintain love with due authority. Seek gradual improvements. Teach children to bear with opposition. Humour not a peevish whining temper. Lead them

early to religious taste, by example, instruction, and well timed reproof. How scandalous to read one's shame in their second selves?

When the wicked are multiplied transgression of course increaseth: but the righteous few shall see their fall *in the end*. 16

Punishment delayed. Numbers of great people in fault slacken the reins of authority, ver. 2. Early discipline is a needful balance. Even from charity the righteous must contribute to overthrow the wicked. One evil companion infects another, Psal. xxxvii. 4.

Correct thy son *in time*, and he shall give thee rest from painful future reflections; yea, he shall by eminence of virtue, credit and usefulness, give raptures of delight unto thy soul. 17

Correction. Wisely to educate has every chance for success, ver. 15. chap. xxii. 6. Give mild methods of discipline the preference. Passionate haste troubles both child and parents. No joy of life equals that of good respectable children. Judicious parental love is a source of great advantages to the state. R.

Where there is no regular communicated vision of truth to human minds, the people are exposed to perish in gross ignorance; but he that, by renewing sentiments of virtue, keepeth the law, happy is he. 18

Education and knowledge. Wise assiduous teachers are as lights to the world, Matth. v. 15, &c. It comes much to the same purpose whether people want means or will not regularly attend them. What is necessary should be ofteneft inculcated. Vices not spoken to fear an evil conscience, Ezek. iii. 26. Isa. xxxix. 9, &c. Amos viii. 11, &c. To love and thirst after practical knowledge is sure to issue in good works and happiness. Ill treatment of honest freedoms leads to future neglect.

Have compassion, O Lord, upon that part of mankind who are strangers to the gospel. Have compassion upon

their ruined and fallen state. Open their eyes and turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ. Succour and relieve those who have the key of knowledge withheld, even by them who should make wise unto salvation. Grant that they who labour in holy things, by giving themselves entirely up to the study of divine wisdom, may teach thy servants with all possible advantage, for their education to eternal life.

- 19 A *sullen malicious* servant will not *allow himself to be corrected*, by *the most clear seasonable words*: for though he understand, he will not answer *agreeable to the conviction of his own mind*.

Servants. The most criminal of all perversity is to withstand the force of undeniable evidence mildly proposed. To good equal masters it is heinous ingratitude,

- 20 Seekest thou a man that is *hasty in his matters and even in his words*; there is more hope of *reclaiming a simple fool*, than of him.

Haste. To observe proper measures and time in *speech* argues superior knowledge, Jam. iii. 2. *Thoughtlessness* and pride hazard opinions rashly, and prevent benefit from others. What they once affirm or deny they persist in, Jam. i. 27. Bitterness and haste makes the lovers of peace to tremble, Jam. iii. 15, &c. Prov. xxvi. 12. —xxvii. 22.

- 21 He that *too delicately* bringeth up his servant from a child, shall have him become *free and familiar as his son at the length*.

Servants. Some base natures cannot brook a repetition of kindnesses, but grow insolent. A master ought neither to be over severe nor over indulgent. Flatter not weak inferiors nor bribe them; else unreasonable demands may be looked for. Overbearing airs and an-

swers from servants are insufferable. Let advancements be gradual, Eccl. x, &c. 1 Kings xvi. 9, &c.

A quick angry man stirreth up means of 22
strife, and a furious man in his wrath abound-
eth in dreadful transgression.

Haste and rage. The virtue of self-government observes a rule with all the passions. They ought neither to be inactive nor to reign. Proportion warmth and severity to degrees of offence. Generous displeasure feels grief for the offender. Be slow to take offence and act with caution. Pride, the sin of hell, is parent to wrath.

A man's pride of heart shall bring him low 23
by provoking great numbers; but sure lasting
honour shall uphold the conciliating humble
in spirit.

Humility and pride. They who are full of conceit are not to be satisfied with respect. They depress others to rise upon them, and stir up revenge. God is their enemy, Obad. i. 4. Esteem and love wait on the humble.

Who so is partner with a thief hateth in 24
effect the quiet of his own soul; he heareth ju-
dicial * cursing for discovery, and bewrayeth
it not.

Thieving and perjury. Not to prevent or discover fraudulent evil is to support the transgressor. Above all, receiving and concealing stolen goods, Psal. l. 16, &c. When judicially sworn, or adjured to speak the truth, we cannot vary without perjuring ourselves, Lev. xv. 1. Zech. v. 3, 4. Mal. iii. 5. To the best an oath is awful, Jer. iv. 2.

The fear of displeasing man bringeth often 25
into a sinful snare, with punishment; but who so

* Perjury, not theft, was punished by law of Moses.

in the face of danger doth good, and putteth his trust in the Lord, shall be safe.

Fear of man, and trust in God. Dreading to offend others is the temptation of a delicate mind. Men of conscience are secretly venerated. God supports and in time will clear them. Heaven is a balance to every private loss.

We trust in thee, the *Almighty and ever living God*, that the goodness for which thou art glorified of all will undoubtedly assist, so as to accomplish the work of our restitution, in dependence on thee, and subserviency to thee. We do not expect success in this undertaking, without thy help, or without our own endeavours; but the conjunction of both, we are sure, is sufficient for all the needs of men, and for all thy gracious designs concerning us, in this state of probation and recovery.

- 26 Many seek the ruler's favour, *while they scruple not often bad means*; but every man's judgement *with the result of it* cometh from the *overruling Lord*.

Promotion. To be advanced and enriched in an evil way are dreadful purchases; and often a source of the most painful lasting uneasiness.

Convince us, *O most great and blessed Lord God*, that thou knowest much better what is fit for us, than we can know what is fit for ourselves; that under the power of this conviction, we may in all our requests resign our will to thy will; desiring that thou wouldst give us *these things* which are good for us, though we ask them not at all, and that thou wouldst not give us those things which are not good for us, though we ask them never so often.

- 27 An unjust man is an abomination to the *scrupulously just*: and he that is *thus* upright in the way of his behaviour, is a *similar, though causeless*, abomination to the *incorrigible wicked*.

Uprightness and injustice. A good man is a perpetual

upbraiding to the sinner. Their aims and courses are directly opposite, John xvi. 18, 19. Gen. iii. 15.



CHAPTER. XXX.

THE words of Agur the son of Jakeh, even the *words of useful* * prophecy, the *same inspired* † man spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal.

Teachers. They prophecy or speak before people who teach sacred things. The weight of matters may supply, in certain cases, our ignorance of a speaker. We should then depend upon the testimonies of those who lived nigh to their times.

Blessed be thou, *O God*, who by the dignity of our being, hast exalted us to the condition and state of those who are made to know and serve, to resemble and enjoy thee.

Surely, *after so many advantages, it would be- 2*
come me to say, I am more † brutish than al-
most any man, and I have not even the under-
standing of a common man. I neither learned 3
wisdom equal to the § hopes of others, nor have
I the knowledge of the || holy.

Diffidence. The first point of wisdom is a deep sense of ignorance. They who have been most improved knew little, and have said so. To be styled a lover of wisdom is more modest and endearing than to be styled wise. Divine principles are the most beneficial.

* *Load, or burden.* † *Or, sage.* H. ‡ *Or, least learned.* H. § *Nor yet of,* &c. H. || *Or, holy things.* H.

Notwithstanding the various manifestations of thyself to us, *most blessed God*, who were created for thee, we have lived as without thee, in the world; and not taken such notice of thy providence and government, as became natures intelligent and rational. Through the shameful abuse of our faculties, they have been rendered defective, bowed down to the earth, and alienated from that divine contemplation and communion, for which they were fitted and designed.

- 4 Who hath yet ascended up into heaven,
 1 *for bringing perfect discoveries from thence, or descended to the deep, for knowing what is there? Who hath gathered the winds as in his fists, to return and let them out at his pleasure? Who hath bound the ocean waters with its amazing supplies, in shores like a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth so firm and fast? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell? O admit one who longs for such discoveries to share in those delights.*

Knowledge of God and his works. If such small parts of the creation exceed our comprehension, how much more the whole with its infinite original? Job xxxviii. 2, &c. Pious curious researches are very becoming, and lead to humble thoughts. *God* is essentially present every where, Psal. cxxxix. 1, &c. Poetical licences are sometimes very beautiful, Psal. civ. 3. Job xxxviii. 9. Isa. xl. 12. Amos ix. 6. Mysteries of nature grow upon the inquisitive mind. All the visible wonders of nature are faint images of divine greatness. *R.* No one can know *God*, but he who seeks to resemble him *R.*

Most blessed and glorious Lord God, who dwellest in that light into which no mortal eye can approach; whom no man hath seen nor can see: we thy creatures, who live far remote from the throne of thy glory, adore and celebrate thee, who art visible only to our faith, and who manifestst thyself unto us by the works of thy hands; who

hast made the earth by thy power, and established the world by thy wisdom, and hast stretched out the heavens by thy understanding. We praise and magnify thy goodness, who hast in no age of the world left thyself without witness and demonstration of thy being among the children of men. Prevent, *O Lord*, by these discoveries, our becoming vain and erroneous, in our apprehensions of thee; that we may not change the truth of God into a lie.

One thing for certain I know, that every word 5
of God is pure from falsehood; he is, and should be depended upon as a protecting shield unto them that, agreeable to order, do fly to put their trust in him.

Trust in God. Things adapted to practice have much clearness in them. The laws of sovereign divine wisdom lead to true perfection and happiness, Psa. xii. 6.—lxxxiv. 11, 12. 1 Kings. viii. 24.

We praise and magnify thy name, *O Lord*, who hast made us to be happy, by communion with thee, and by the enjoyment of thee; and who hast given us all proper means, and special advantages for such knowledge and resemblances of thy perfection, as are necessary and useful for accomplishing thy most gracious design in the creation of us!

Add thou not unto his *written revealed* 6
words, lest he reprove thee by *fore judicial stripes*, and thou be found out a notorious liar.

Word of God. Imposition and evil design are seldom separated from adding to *God's word*. Such an impiety is a charge upon divine wisdom and love, Deut. xiii. 1. Matth. vii. 15, &c. Essential scripture articles are brought to a level with the meanest capacities. We cannot be too suspicious of refinements derogatory to a good life, Matth. v. 17, &c. Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

Merciful Father, who hast made us to distinguish by our higher faculties between moral good and evil, may we always perceive the great reason and necessity there is

for such as we are, to choose the good, and refuse the evil. We adore thee in particular, *most holy Lord God*, for that thou who didst, at sundry times, and in divers manners, speak unto the fathers by the prophets, and unto them by angels, hast in the last period of time, spoken unto us, by thy son *Jesus Christ*, and that *God* is now manifested in the flesh. Make us thoroughly sensible of the divine glory that there is in holiness, and righteousness, the religion of men, by the discovery made in the life of *Christ*, that *God* himself lives by those measures; and owns the law, and accounts holiness to be his glory. Rescue thy divine religion from those corruptions which have been any where introduced upon it, by length of time, and by decay of piety, and by the designs of wicked and unreasonable men!

- 7 Two things have I *earnestly* required of thee, O my God, deny me them not before I
8 die. Remove far from me *the pride of vanity* and *the artifice of lies*; give me neither *on the one hand an extreme poverty*, nor yet *on the other superabundant riches*, but feed me with *an allowance of food* * convenient for me.
9 Lest I be full *by means of wealth*, and deny thee in my practice, and say, *to the conviction of all around*, Who is the Lord, whom I ought to worship? or lest I be poor, and *tempted to steal*, and, *for escaping the punishments of human justice*, take the name of my great God in vain, so as *horribly to forswear*.

Pride, lying, extreme wealth and poverty. Prayer doth naturally arise out of a sense of need. Spiritual concerns should have our principal regard, Matth. vi. 9, &c. What leads with greatest ease and advantage to endless life, infinite wisdom alone can judge of. Men of reflection and seriousness are most jealous of their own infirmities.

* Compare Lev. v. 1. Ex xx. 7

Fly from danger, and pray for grace to avoid it. Lying even to men is detestably mean. Mouth, face and heart ought ever to accord. A sober humble reasoning with *God*, in prayer, is usefully impressive. Neglect of devout acknowledgements is practical denial. A quiet ordinary way of life is the safest. How many in high life are chargeable with denying *God* in practice? Sore and long continued straits often lead to bad measures for relief. An oath is the great bond of society; and to tamper with it is to seal our own damnation, Zech. v. 3, &c.

We would confide and acquiesce, *O Lord*, in thy wisdom and goodness, who orderest all the events of things and states of men; and we acknowledge that it is the privilege of the whole world, that thou art the governor of it, since nothing but what is good can proceed from thee, and whatever evil can proceed from others, is subject to the check and controul of thee, who art the best and greatest being.

Accuse not *wantonly* a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee for *so great an injury*, and thou fall under vengeance, as one who will be found * guilty of cruel lying. 10

Servants. Slight faults, or scrimp evidence, should stop an officious accuser's mouth. It is murder without provocation to meddle between near relatives. Some people's credit is their living. A false accuser when found out is justly hated. Itself a sad curse, Psal. xiv. 6, 7. Jam. ii. 13.—v. 3. Eccl. iv. 2.

There is a † generation of mankind that 11
curseth in effect their father, and doth not
bless by good behaviour their tender anxious mother. There is a generation of mankind that 12
are pure from whatever is culpable, in their own
eyes, and yet is not at all washed from their
hateful polluting filthiness. There is a genera- 13
tion of mankind, O how lofty from pride are

* Compare chap. v. 10, 11. Ezek. vi. 6. † Or, race. H.

their *bodily* eyes! and their eye-lids *as they walk* are lifted up *with contempt upon others.*

- 14 There is a generation *of mankind*, whose teeth are as swords *to tear and destroy*, and their jaw-teeth as *sharp-cutting* knives, to devour the *unable* poor from off the earth, and the *most* needy from among *their fellow-men.*

Companions. It is of the utmost consequence to be directed in choice of familiars. The worst of all *wicked* people are the ungrateful to near and dear benefactors. Self-deceit cannot endure to be set right, and must perish. Devout affectation leads to this. Incivility is a sure symptom of pride, Isa. lxxv. 5. Luke xviii. 9, &c. Specious imposers do most hurt. To add misery to wretchedness is truly dreadful, Jude 11.

- 15 The horse-leach * hath two *insatiable* daughters, crying *with assiduous vehemence*, Give, give. There are three things that are never *to be satisfied in time*, yea, four things say not,
16 It is enough. The grave; and the barren † womb; the *parched* earth that is not filled with *rain-water*; and the *unquenchable* fire that saith not *more than the former*, It is quite enough.

The grave and barrenness. Instructions taken from sensible objects strike strong, and are well remembered. Shortness adds to power and beauty. Covetousness and prodigality have a similar thirst and voraciousness. By having only one object they are able to outwit. Impatience to rise in rank is a third insatiable appetite, Esth. v. 11, &c. Inclinations for children sometimes increase with the improbability of being gratified, Gen. xxx. 1. Prov. xvi. 3.

* Or, as the progeny of, &c. H. † Some, the gier-eagle, Lev. ii. 18. Deut. xiv. 17. Or, vulture. H.

The eye * that mocketh at his *advising* father, and despiseth to obey *the gentle orders of* his mother, the ravens of the valley, *rather than leave him unpunished*, shall be sent forth to pick it out, and the young † eagles shall be allowed to eat it wholly up. 17

Children. How varied are the representations of horrid unnatural crimes, in this sacred book, and how full of argument? Movements of the heart do instantly affect the eye. What is out of the reach of human law is the more obnoxious to divine displeasure. Sooner or later disobedient children may expect revenge. Stoning was that of the Mosaic Law; and bodies unburied might be picked and eat literally.

There be three things which are too † wonderful for me *to comprehend*, yea, four things which I know not *clearly*. The way of an eagle *soaring high* in the air, the way of a serpent *which glides upon* § a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the *tempestuous* sea, and the way of a man *who propagates* with a maid. Such too is the *secreted* way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, *so to speak what is forbidden*, and wipeth her mouth *for concealment*, and saith, *as though modest*, I have done no wickedness you can blame me for. 18 19 20

Natural mysteries. See last notes. Those skilled in the arts of dissimulation leave as few truces as may be, for finding out guilt.

* *A taste for the sublime in composition must delight in the bold eastern manner.* † *Or, sons of the eagle.* ‡ *Wonderful is the eagle's distant rapid flight by apparent weak means; the quick serpent's windings and turnings upon hard slippery rock; the command of a large loaded vessel, in the heart of huge waves, by a small helm; the endearments between the sexes, and how these produce.* § *Or rather, up a rock. H.*

- 21 For three things the earth is *peculiarly* dis-
 22 quieted, and for four which it cannot *well*
 23 bear. For a *base* servant, when *by artifice*, he
 reigneth *over great numbers*, and a *raging* fool
 when he is filled with *delicate* meat. For an
 odious *peevish* woman when she is married to
 one who loves peace, and an hand-maid that by
supplanting is made *unexpected* heir to her *foolish*
 mistress.

Promotions hurtful. Abuse of trust to undue freedoms, in masters, gives command in the end, to vile assuming inferiors, chap. xix. 10. Weak, hot-headed people are insufferable companions. Guard against what inflames blood and passion. The less restrained in freedoms that married people are, the more they become hateful. The suddenly elevated are the most extravagant. A wife choice among equals, and at a proper season of life, is one of the most probable means of happiness.

- 24 There be four things, *of the animal kind*,
 which are *of little size* upon the earth, but
 25 they are *nevertheless* exceeding wise. The
 ants are a people not strong, yet they *assiduously*
 prepare their meat * in the *fair sum-*
 26 *mer season*. The † conies also are but a feeble
 folk, yet, *as conscious of this*, make they their
 27 houses in the *holes under rocks*. The locusts
 have no *discernable* king, yet go they forth, all
 28 of them, *as for battle*, by bands. The spider
 taketh hold with her *feeble* hands, and is,
from the fineness of what she weaves, to be found
sometimes even in king's palaces.

Instinct. Brute instructors. Prudence, by fit means, doth execute what is both safe and honourable, chap. viii.

* Or, lay up their food.

† Or, mountain-mice.

12. The least and meanest of the brute-creatures may teach good students. Their instincts are regular, safe and comfortable; yet do too often escape us. When means of support are plentiful, then is the time to provide. To be idle is to be unnaturally cruel, 1 Tim. v. 8. Caution makes up for want of strength. What is impotent, being alone, becometh powerful in bands, Ex. x. 4. Eccl. iv. 9, &c. Considerations of a doubtful kind cannot vindicate dividing, Psal. cxxxiii. 1, &c. Watchfulness and industry will get the better of great difficulties. Application supplies the want of genius. The beauties of the universe prepare the mind for the doctrines of religion. R.

Lord, teach us so to number our days, as to apply our hearts to wisdom and religion, by which alone we can become capable of that mercy which is necessary to eternal salvation; and suffer us not to lose one day, or one hour more. But grant that we may redeem our remaining time, because our past have been evil; and by the utmost diligence, and the most prudent conduct in this greatest affair of eternity, lay up a good foundation of religious improvement of ourselves against time shall be no more.

There be three things which go well in dignity, yea, four are comely in their majestic method of going. A lion, which is strongest even among wild beasts, and turneth not away in his anger, for any. A grey-hound * at full speed, an † he-goat also, as he sets out with his herd; and a beloved king, against whom there is no rising up with success.

Beauties natural. Certain appearances denote fortitude and generosity. The horse, as well as the grey-hound is swiftp, Job xxxix. 19, &c. Leaders who claim pre-eminence should be above timidity. An affectionate prince will ever be supported; being bold as a lion, ready to redress the injured, wise and active.

* The cock, strong in loins. H. † Or, ram.

- 32 If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up
thyself, *while in anger, to molest*, or if thou hast
so much as thought to perpetrate evil, lay thine
hand *without a moment's hesitation* upon thy
33 mouth *for solemn inward worship*. Stand in
awe of offending; for surely as the churning
of milk-cream bringeth forth butter, * and
the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood;
so the forcing of wrath, *by execution of wicked
designs*, bringeth forth ruinous strife.

Offence and restitution. Think of consequences in every case, especially rebellious ones. Thoughts of vice should be instantly repressed. Vent them not to others. Revere *Almighty God*, Eccl. viii. 3 — x. 20. Malice increaseth with speaking of lies.

We trust in thee, who art the *original of our being*, and the *Saviour* of sinners, that nothing which is necessary to that salvation, and the bringing us to a blessed immortality, shall be wanting in thee, who art good unto all, beyond the desires and acknowledgements of thy creatures.



CHAP. XXXI.

- T**HE *important* words of King † Lemuel,
the *rich comprehensive* † prophecy that
his *excellent* mother taught him.

Instruction. Divine sayings should have great authority, 1 Cor. ii. 11. 2 Pet. i. 20.

* Some, so he that aggravateth wrath will cause bloodshed; and he who provoketh passion, mischief. H. † Of, or for God, Compare 1 Kings ii. 15, 22. ‡ Or, burden.

What, my *dear son*, shall I urge to ensure *vir-* 2
tue and happiness? And what, the son of my *
 womb? And what, the son of my *ardent*
prayer, with vows?

Earnest address. Children are bred and carried about under many sufferings. What we receive by prayer should be returned with thanksgiving, and vows of obedience to heaven.

Give not thy strength and substance in youth, 3
 unto *lewd* women, nor thy ways of irregular
attachment, to that which destroyeth kings of
opulence themselves.

Impure living. Nothing hurts health, credit and fortune, so much as a sensual course. It is the death of fine beneficial affection, Hos. iv. 11. Prov. v. 7, &c.

It is not for kings, whose employments are *va-* 4
rious, delicate and extensive, O Lemuel, it is not
 for kings to drink wine greedily, nor for
 princes but a little beneath them, strong drink
 of any kind. Lest they drink to intoxication, 5
 and forget the support of law, agreeable to office,
 and pervert the judgement of right to any of
 the afflicted.

Rulers and sobriety. To dose away life, or to be given to riot, are peculiarly inimical to great trusts; and dangerous example to inferiors. Omission of duty is bad; and opposing it still worse. One vice is no apology for another, or even alleviation. A habit of drunkenness leads to numberless cruel ills, Eccl. x. 16, 17.

Give strong drink, as a medicine, unto him 6
 that is ready to perish, and wine, in suitable
measure, unto those that be of heavy hearts.
 Let him drink to the length of cheering, and 7

* To distinguish from adoption or law.

forget his poverty, and *through time, with continued regimen*, remember his misery no more.

Drink how to use. The guilt of drinking lies in the excess, or unseasonableness thereof; both unnatural. Keep reason awake and close enthroned, for what is pious, just and charitable. Passions and appetites have their use but must be governed. Cordials are for weakness, disease and age, which loathe at common food. Medicines should be dropped as soon as possible, lest they come to demand too much.

- 8 Open thy mouth for *defence of the dumb, and likewise in defending* the cause of all such as are *iniquitously* appointed to destruction.
- 9 Open thy mouth *cheerfully and wide*, judge righteously *in favour of each*, and plead with *earnestness* the cause of the poor and needy.

Compassionate beneficence. Vices prejudicial to trust ought anxiously to be guarded against. Generous zeal is yet more becoming. Want of resolution at times is want of justice. The more calamitous any state is, it requires the more haste and diligence to relieve, Exod. xxii. 21, &c. Job xxix. 11, &c.

- 10 Who can find a * *diligent virtuous woman*? † For her price is far above *exquisite polished rubies*.

A good wife. Choice of friends is a delicate point. Fortune, wit and beauty bring no adequate relief to domestic wants. A married state, under wise direction, has many advantages. An irregular life is mere affected freedom. Be cool and adviseable by experienced age. Nature and custom give to one sex the privilege

* *This praise of a good wife, to the end of the Chapter, is written agreeable to the order of the Hebrew Alphabet; like Psalms cxix. cxlv.* † *There may be much poetical license both as to expression and order.*

of first address. Moderate expectation and mutual forbearing, lead to conjugal happiness. Virtue declines not with beauty, wealth and form. Pure love is a great preservative to this *R.* Modesty heightens charms of wit and beauty. *R.* Purely to love diffuses a secret joy through every action. *R.*

The heart of her husband doth safely trust **11**
in her management, so that he shall have no
need of unlawful spoil for subsistence.

Domestic economy. Truth and regular affection ensure fidelity. To make light of perjury and injustice is the consummation of guilt. Secrecy and domestic prudence are great qualities for mutual ease and freedom. Unforeseen losses should be expected, prepared for. Moderation of taste and wise economy enrich with contentment. Live agreeable to reason; and not whim, custom or passion.

She will do him *much pleasant profitable* **12**
*good in return, * and not wilful evil of any*
kind, all the days of her life.

Marriage happiness. Female soothing measures should soften severe labours without doors. Alleviate misfortune by kind looks and gentle words. Marriage friendship should increase with years. The very weakest, if not worst, are capable of good by fits. Reason and scripture are still the same.

She seeketh to purchase wool and flax, with **13**
the overplus of household maintenance, and work-
eth willingly up both materials with her hands.

Female industry. Some kinds of labour suit all conditions, if it were only by way of example. This makes leisure a real enjoyment. Household clothing and furniture are fit objects of a good wife's regard, chap. xxi. 25. There is an order in every business requisite to succeed and save time. What is most needed ought ever

* See Deut. xxxii. 6. *H.*

to have the place of mere show. Idleness is peculiarly blameable, among those of middle or low rank.

- 14 She is for *profitableness*, like the merchant's ships, she bringeth, by means of home-industry, her more delicate food from afar.

Female industry. Foreign trade admits of few delays. No surmountable difficulties ought to discourage. What is rare stimulates diligence. To give is the privilege of wealth.

- 15 She riseth also, upon occasions, while it is yet night, and giveth out meat to her household servants, who must work abroad at day-break, and a portion * in like manner, to her maidens within doors.

Female industry. A good wife's presence is necessary to assign tasks with clearness, and proportion to ability. The most upright should neither be tempted with too much power nor straitened, Col. iv. 1. 1 Tim. v. 8. Order, speed and season tend to enrich.

- 16 She attentively considereth the value of a field, and buyeth it; with the fruit of her industrious hands she planteth a vineyard afterwards.

Female industry. Prudent managing seldom fails of great success. Application should keep pace with the widening of our sphere. Means of usefulness and health often go together.

- 17 She girdeth the upper loose flowing garment to her loins with new exertions of strength, and strengtheneth her arms likewise for diligent
18 work. She perceiveth that her former merchandise is good to numbers more needful than her own: her candle therefore goeth not out

* Or task, Ex. v. 14. H.

*for any length of time by night. She layeth 19
even then her exemplary hands to the spindle,
and her hands hold the distaff to which it is
appended.*

Female industry. To be ready for service renders execution easy, John xiii. 4. So do watchfulness and diligence. A clear proof of success animates. What may be well spared from sleep is good gain; and a lengthening of natural life.

She * stretcheth out her hand to the relief 20
of poor people; yea, she reacheth forth her wide
distended hands to supply, as much as possible, the
needy from want of health, meat and cordials.

Economy and beneficence. Generous alms sanctify substance. As open to successful work, they should never be shut to acts of liberal love, Eph. iv. 28. Mere worldly prudence is mean, covetous, abominable. A pitying heart enlarges charitable communications, Deut. xv. 7, &c. It takes noble relieving thought even about distant calamities. Frugality, diligence and almsgiving are the best of all house-establishments. To be hospitable confirms authority and gains good-will. R.

She is not afraid of the winter † snow, for 21
all her most immediate household: for all her
household are not only clothed to the full, but
with rich warming ‡ scarlet itself.

Female industry. Consult ability for giving and wisely proportion, Psal. cxii. 5. Forget not in the heat of summer that winter cometh on. Each season of the year has important advantages. Forecast requires judgment as well as inclination to work.

She maketh herself, for amusement, coverings 22

* Sentiments variously set forth, touch different inclinations, passions and interests. † Or, cold. H. ‡ Or, are clothed with double garments, Ex. xxii. 4. H. See ver. 15.

of *beautified* tapestry, her *own personal* clothing is of *fine* * filk and purple, *suitable to her high rank*.

Domestic conveniences. What consumes not too much thought and time may be laid out for ornament, to distinguish and put in mind of duties. Only remember income and charitable claims. Instructive historical drawings are valuable furniture. Clothing is providentially suited to climate.

- 23 Her husband is *easily* known from his dress, and *respected* † in the gates, when he sitteth ‡ among the *numerous wealthy* elders of the land.

Domestic conveniences. Marks of female industry are highly creditable to a beloved husband. Inferiors thereby are much affected.

- 24 She maketh fine linen, *more than a family can use*, and selleth it out to *ethers*, and delivereth *curious netted* girdles unto the *exporting* merchant.

Female industry. Appetite become dull, by sickness or age, needs a whet from the importation of things that are rare.

- 25 *What contributes to strength and honour* are her *present* clothing, and *with all the expences which these require*, she shall continue to rejoice, by an *easy affluent state* in time to come.

Economy and diligence. Domestic love and liberal extensive kindness are certain means of powerful credit. They defend and ornament like finest bodily habits, 1 Tim. ii. 15. Titus ii. 4, 5.

* Or, linen. H. † Prov. ix. 13. H. ‡ Deut. xxv. 7. Court of judicature, or place of public resort, Prov. i. 21.

She openeth her mouth with *instructive* 26
wisdom, and in her tongue, *from a benevolent*
heart, is the law of *incessant* kindness.

Female civility. When beauty fades, new and ever-blooming charms ought to be found. *R.* Polite and useful conversation is highly captivating. What relaxes most should have something edifying in view. The more one purely loves, the more their company will be desired. Slander, defamation and calumny are unknown to such. Their reproofs are secret, mild, seasonable. To treat men always with the utmost rigour they deserve, is brutality, and not justice. *R.*

She looketh well, *in short*, to the *whole ways* 27
of her household, *both children and servants*,
and eateth not the bread of *dangerous* idleness.

A good wife. The slothful must either eat what others have laboured for, without their own consent; or else be more injurious. An idler is intolerable to a good master or mistress, 1 Tim. v. 13, 14. 2 Thess. iii 11, &c. Yet do they mildly reprove.

Her *grateful* children arise up, *under so striking* 28
an example, and call her *eminently* blessed;
her husband also, and he praiseth her *in just*
warm terms. Many daughters *for encouraging* 29
the honourable state, are *his words*, have done
virtuously *no doubt*, but *in the possession of what*
is most valuable, thou, my long, dear, wedded
companion, excellest them all. Remember ye 30
the experience of advanced life, and let what follows dwell in your hearts, Favour obtained by either gracefulness of person, rank or wealth, is deceitful, and beauty of looks is equally vain, as to true lasting enjoyment; but a woman that feareth the Lord *at heart*, and ever acts as before him,

- 31 she shall be praised *to the last*. Give her *only* of the *just charitable* fruit of her *industrious* hands, and *so* let her own *useful* works praise her in the gates, *where nobles, judges and magistrates ofteneft meet*.

Praise of female excellence. Tender love with prudent authority extort commendation. Honest fervour is hardly to be kept within bounds. The simplicity of praise is much preferable to panegyric strains. To be satisfied upon a general review is the utmost we ought to seek. Sensual ignorance ought not to judge. Finest flowers fade quickest. Principle is uniform. Virtuous lustre brightens with years, and lives after death. To deny commendation to faithful, pious, charitable deeds is horrible ingratitude. Pleasures ought not to lose their relish, when they become lawful. *R.* Marriage-union, diminishes the pains of life, and augments its pleasures, by sharing them. *R.* Here souls become acquainted; but above, in the element of love, their union is consummated. Pure love is immortal. *R.* Taste, pleasure, reason and duty, all combine, to augment a virtuous passion.

INDEX

OF

*Pious, moral, political and economical Subjects,
in the Book of Proverbs; referring to Chap-
ters and Verse, in the preceding Work.*

HAPPINESS.

In approving ourselves to God.

Whence life, chap. xii. 24. : xi. 19.

Blessing of favour, x. 6. : xii. 2.

Joy, xxix. 26. : xviii. 9.

Preservation, x. 25, 29, 30. : xi. 4, 8. : xii. 13. : xiii. 6.

Prosperity, xv. 6. : xiv. 11.

Long life, x. 27. : xii. 7. : xxix. 18.

In the estate of wickedness.

Wealth is accursed, chap. x. 2, 3. : xiii. 25. : xxi. 18. :
xv. 6.

Likewise life, x. 25, 27. : xii. 7. : ii. 22. : xiv. 11.

Fame, x. 7.

Devotion, xv. 29. : xxviii. 9. : xv. 8, 9. : xxi. 27.

Evil of loss is inflicted, xii. 26. : x. 28.

Pain, chap. x. 28. : xiii. 9. : xi. 18. : xxvi. 10. : xii. 26. :
x. 6. : xiii. 21. : v. 22. : xxix. 6. : xi. 5, 31. : xiii. 6 :
iii. 33.

Death, x. 24. : v. 23. : xi. 19.

Damnation, xiv. 32. : xv. 11. : xii. 2. : x. 29. : xix. 29.

PRUDENCE.

Wherein it consisteth, iv. 26, 27.

Whereby it is ruled, directed, vi. 23. : xxx. 5. : iv. 20, 21,
22. : vii. 2, &c.

Comprehends wisdom, viii. 12. : xiv. 8. : ix. 12.

Of great excellence, iii. 13, &c. : xvi. 16.

Procures knowledge, xv. 14. : xviii. 15. : xix. 2. : x. 14. :
xiii. 16. : xiv. 18.

Safety, ii. 10, 11, 12, 13. : xv. 24.

- Good direction of actions, viii. 20.
 Of words, xvi. 23. : x. 12 : xix. 25.
 Procures wealth, viii. 21.
 Honour, iii. 25.
 Life, xvi. 22. : viii. 34. : iv. 5, &c.
 Foresees and provides, xx. 24. : xxii. 3. : xxv.
 Is discreet in actions, xiv. 15. : xxiv. 5. : xiv. 24
 In speeches, xv. 2. : x. 12, 3. : xv. 23. : xx. 15. : xiv.
 3. : xii. 18. : xvi. 24.
 Not overwise, xxi. 16. : xvii. 16. : xxiv. 7. : xxix. 11,
 20. : xix. 2.
 Not foolish, or rash, xiv. 24 : xvii. 16 : xxiv. 7.
 Nor wicked, i. 7. : xiv. 9. : xiii. 19. : xv. 21. : i. 31.
 xi. 6.
 Nor obstinate, x. 23. : xiii. 16. : xxvii. 22. : xxvi. 11. :
 xxiii. 9. : i. 22, &c.
 Nor wretched, xiv. 13. : x. 13. : xxvi. 3. : x. 8, 10. :
 xiii. 20. : xxi. 16. : x. 14. : i. 32

JUSTICE.

- Gives to all their due, xv. 21. : xx. 7. : xvi. 17. : xii. 22.
 To God fear, iii. 6. : xiv. 2. : i. 7. : ii. 3, 4, 5.
 Whence contentment, xv. 16.
 Hope of future blifs, xxiii. 18. : xiv. 26. : iii. 7, 8. : xix.
 23. : xiv. 27. : xxviii. 14. : xxx. 9.
 Honour in the best things, chap. iii. 9, 10.
 Best times, viii. 17.
 Obedience in attending to his will, i. 33. : iv. 20, 21. :
 x. 17. : viii. 29.
 In executing it, xxviii. 7, 4. : xix. 16.
 Fidelity in performance to God, xx. 5.
 To man, xii. 22. : xxviii. 10, 20. : xxv. 19. : xvii. 13.
 In reproof, xxvii. 5, 6. : xv. 12. : xxv. 12.
 Truth in words, xii. 17. : xiv. 25.
 Of great importance, xviii. 21. : xv. 4. : xii. 19.
 Opposed to this is the liar, xiv. 5. : vi. 16, 17, 19. :
 xix. 28. : xxvi. 28. : xii. 19.
 Soon known and punished, xix. 5. : xii. 22. : xxi. 28,
 29 : xxviii. 18. : xxiv. 28. : xxv. 18. : xxx. 7, 8. :
 xix. 22.
 The slanderer, xvi. 27, 30.

- Who inventeth ill rumours, xiii. 5.
 Or unseasonably meddles, xx. 3. : xi. 13. : xxvi. 20. :
 xviii. 8. : xxv. 23.
 The dissembler, x. 18.
 Who is malicious, xxvi. 24, &c.
 Vain glorious, xiii. 7.
 Covetous, xiii. 7. : xx. 14. : xxiii. 6, 7.
 Impenitent, xxviii. 13.
 The flatterer, xxvii. 14. : xxix. 5. : xxvi. 28. : xx. 19.
 Truth in dealings, xi. 3, 5. : xv. 19. : xxi. 8, 3, 15. :
 x. 16. : xxix. 7. : iii. 29. : xvi. 11. : xv. 9. : xii.
 26. : xxviii. 6. : x. 7.
 Contrary to which is deceit, xxvi. 18, 19. : xii. 20. : xx.
 10. : xxix. 24. : i. 19 : xii. 27. : x. 17.
 Love to *God*, viii. 17, 21.
 To men in forgiving, x. 12. : xii. 16. : xvii. 9. : xxv. 21.
 Opposed to whom are the contentious, vi. 18. : xviii.
 19. : xvi. 29. : xviii. 6. : xxvi. 21 : xvi. 28. : xxx.
 33. : xxix. 9.
 The envious, xxi. 10. : xxiv. 17. : xiv. 30. : xxvii. 4. :
 xxiv. 20. : iii. 31. : xxiii. 17. : xxiv. 1, 2, 26. :
 iii. 32.

JUSTICE TO MAN ONLY.

- First, in mercy, iii. 3. : xxi. 13. : xii. 10. : xvi. 6. : iii.
 4. : xiv. 31. : xix. 17. : xi. 17. : xxi. 21. : xiv. 21.
 Contrary to which are unmercifulness, xxii. 7. : xiv. 20. :
 xix. 7.
 Oppression, xxx. 14. : xxii. 16, 22. : xxy. 20. : xi. 17 :
 xxii. 23. : xxi. 13.
 Bloodthirstiness, xxix. 10. : xxiv. 15. : xxviii. 17. : i.
 11, &c. : xii. 10. : xxvi. 2, 27. : xxiv. 16. :
 xxviii. 17.
 Second in liberality, xxii. 9. : iii. 27, 28. : xi. 25. :
 xxviii. 27. : xi. 24.
 Contrary to which are covetousness, i. 19. : xxiii. 6. :
 xxi. 26. : xxiii. 4, 5. : xxvii. 20 : xi. 24, 28. : xxviii.
 8. : xxx. 15, 8, 9. : xviii. 11. : vi. 8.
 Prodigality, xii. 9. : xxi. 17. : xxviii. 7, 19. : vi. 12,
 14, 15. : xiii. 11. : xxii. 6.
 Third, in diligence, xvi. 26. : xx. 13. : x. 4. : xiii. 4. :
 xiv. 23. : xii. 27, 24. : xxii. 29.

Opposed to which is slothfulness, xix. 24. : xxvi. 24. :
vi. 10 : xv. 19. : xxii. 13. : xxvi. 13, 16. : xii. 11 :
xiii. 14, 15. : xx. 4, 13. : xxiv. 30, 31, 32. : x.
4. : vi. 6, &c. : xxiv. 33.

TEMPERANCE.

In diet, xxv. 28. : xxiii. 1, 2, 31. : xxv. 16. : xxvii. 7. :
xxx. 21, 22. : xxiii. 29. : xx. 1.

Modesty in words, xvii. 27. : x. 19. : xviii. 4.

Seasonable and to purpose, x. 21, 31. : xii. 14. : xiii. 2 :
xviii. 20. : xii. 27. xi. 12, 28. : x. 19. : xvii. 28. :
xxi. 23. : xiii. 33. : xv. 2, 14, 32. : xviii. 2. : xii.
23, 6. : xiv. 3. : xvii. 20. : x. 31. : xv. 4. : xviii. 7.

In actions, xi. 16.

Humility, xxix. 23. : xxx. 2, 3 : xi. 2. : xiii. 31. : xxvi.
19. : xv. 33. : xviii. 12. : xxviii. 13. : xxix. 23. :
xxii. 14.

Contrary whereunto is pride, xxx. 13, 22. : xvi. 2. :
xxi. 2. : xxv. 6, 27. : xxvii. 2. : xxviii. 11. : xviii.
1. : xvi. 12, 18. : xiv. 3. : xxi. 4. : xxx. 32. : vi.
17. : xvi. 5. : xv. 25. : xiii. 22. : xi. 2. : xviii. 3. :
ix. 7. : xix. 29. : xxix. 8. : xxi. 4, 11.

Continency of lust, v. 15, 20. : vi. 25. : ii. 17 : xxiii.
27, 28.

Of anger, xvi. 32 : xiv. 29. : xix. 11. : xxix. 8. : xvi.
23. : xx. 3. : xiv. 17, 29. : xxvii. 4. : xxix. 22. :
xxii. 24, 25.

FORTITUDE, xviii. 14. : xxviii. 1. : xxiv. 10. : iii. 5,
6. : xvi. 3. : xiv. 32. : xiii. 12.

Whence confidence in *God*, patience, safety, xxx. 5. :
xxi. 31 : xviii. 12. : xvi. 20. : xxviii. 26. : xxvii. 1. :
iii. 11, 12. : x. 28. : xix. 3. : xxix. 1. : xx. 22.

POLITICS.

Degrees subordinate, chap. xxii. 2. : viii. 15, 16. : xxx.
27. : xxviii. 2.

KING.

Not low, servile, xix. 10. : xxx. 21, 22.

Not lascivious, xxxi. 23, 4, 5. : xxiii. 2, 3.

Not hollow, dissembling, xvii. 7.
 Not childish, imprudent, xxviii. 16.
 But temperate, just, xi. 11. : xvi. 12. : xiv. 34. : xxix. 2.
 Merciful, xx. 18.
 Wife, viii. 16. : xx. 26.
 Bountiful, xxviii. 16.
 Slow to anger, xvi. 32. : xix. 12. : xxx. 29, 31.
 Secret, xxv. 3. : xxi. 1.
 His actions good, xvi. 12, 17. : xx. 8. : xxix. 4, 14, 12. :
 xvi. 10. : xxxi. 8, 9. : xvii. 26. : xxv. 1.
COUNSELLOR, xi. 14. : xxiv. 26 : xv. 22. : xxix.
 18. : xi. 30. : xvi. 21. : xiii. 3.
 Requires wisdom, xxiv. 5. : xiv. 33. : xvii. 24. : xv. 2. :
 xxiv. 7. : xxvi. 1, 8. : xviii. 17. : xx. 5.
 Providence, xxiii. 3. : xiii. 16. : xxi. 22. : xiv. 16. :
 xxi. 30. : xii. 3.
 Piety, xxviii. 18. : xxix. 2. : xxviii. 28. : xxv. 6.
 Justice, xxviii. 21. : xxiv. 23. : xviii. 5. : xxiv. 24. :
 xvii. 15, 23. : xviii. 16. : xxi. 7. : xv. 27. : xxi. 15. :
 xix. 25. : xxi. 11, 2. : xiv. 5. : xii. 17. : xviii. 17. :
 xix. 5, 9. : xiv. 31. : xxii. 22. : xxiv. 26.

COURTIER.

Must be discreet, xvi. 15. : xix. 12. : xiv. 35.
 Religious, xxii. 11. : xi. 27. : xii. 26. : xxii. 4. : xv.
 33. : xxv. 6.
 Humble, see the last, chap. xxv. 15. : xvii. 9. : xxii. 29.
 xiii. 11. : xvii. 8. : xix. 6. : xxii. 6.

SUBJECT.

To revere his prince, xiv. 28. : xix. 6. : xxix. 26. : xxiv.
 22. : xvii. 11.
 To obey, see the last.
 Respect superiors, xxii. 7. : xxvii. 1.
 Oblige inferiors, xi. 12. : xiv. 21. : iii. 30. : xvii. 14. :
 xxv. 8, 9. : xxvi. 17. : vi. 16, 19. : xxviii. 19. : xiv.
 4. : xi. 26. : xxiv. 30. : xxxi. 14. : xxii. 28. : xxiii.
 10, 11. : xxviii. 20, 22. : xx. 21.
 To observe truth in friendship, xviii. 24. : xxvii. 10, 6,
 9, 17. : xix. 4. : xvii. 17. : xxvii. 19. : xxv. 17. :
 xvii. 18. : vi. 1, &c. : xi. 15.

ECONOMICS.

- Husbands* to be wise, xxiv. 3, 27. : xi. 29. : xv. 6, 16.
Stayed and thrifty, xxvii. 26, 27. : xviii. 22. : ii. 17. :
 xii. 4.
Chaste, v. 6, &c. xv. &c. : vi. 25, &c. ; ix. 17, 18. : ii.
 18, 19. : v. 4, 5. : xxiii. 27.
Quiet and loving, xxii. 14. : xvii. 1, 9. : xix. 11.
Wife to be faithful, xii. 4. : xxxi. 10, 11, 17. : vii. 6, &c.
 xi. 16. : xxiii. 28. : xxx. 20.
Dutiful and obedient, xv. 1. : xxx. 23, 21. : xix. 13 :
 xxvii. 15. : xxv. 24. : xxvii. 19, 16.
Prudent in all her actions, xiv. 1. : xi. 42. : xxxi. 13, &c.
Speeches, xxxi. 26.
Parents, owe to their children provision, xvii. 6. : xiii.
 22. : i. 8. : xvii. 21.
Education, see the last, chap. xxii. 6. : xxiii.
Correction, xiii. 24. : xxii. 25. : xxix. 15 : xix. 18, 19.
 xxv. 14 : iv. 3 : xxix. 17.
Children to obey parental instruction, xv. 20 : x. 1. :
 xxiii. 24. : xix. 13. : xxix. 3. : xxiii. 25. : xiii. 1. :
 i. 8. : xxiii. 22. : vi. 20. ; xxx. 11. : xx. 20. :
 xxx. 17.
To submit to correction, xii. 1. : xv. 5. : vi. 23. : xv. 10.
To care for their estate, xxviii. 24. : xix. 26. : xx. 11. :
 xxiii. 16.
Masters to provide for servants, xii. 9. : xxvii. 27. :
 xxix. 21, 19. : xvii. 2.
Servants to be faithful, xxix. 13. : xiii. 17. : xxvii. 23,
 18. : x. 26.

P O E M S.

H A P P I N E S S.

1 **F**ORSAKE my soul the tents of sin,
How false her joys appear !
Noise and confusion dwell within :
Peace is a stranger there.

2 Peace never fix'd her sacred throne
So near the gates of hell ;
She reigns in pious breasts alone,
Where heavenly virtues dwell.

3 The men who keep the laws of God,
His choicest blessings share ;
Or, if he lifts his chast'ning rod,
'Tis with a father's care.

4 His mighty pow'r shall guard the just,
His wisdom point their way ;
His eye shall watch their sleeping dust,
His hand revive their clay.

5 Begin ye saints, the joyful task,
His praise employ your tongue ;
And soon eternity will ask
A more exalted song.

THE BEATITUDES.

- 1 **B**LESS'D are the humble souls that see
Their emptiness and poverty ;
Treasures of grace to them are given,
And crowns of joy laid up in heaven.
- 2 Bless'd are the men of broken heart,
Who mourn for sin with inward smart ;
From heaven the streams of mercy flow,
A healing balm for all their wo.
- 3 Bless'd are the meek who stand afar
From rage and passion, noise and war ;
God will secure their happy state,
And plead their cause against the great.
- 4 Bless'd are the souls that thirst for grace,
Hunger and long for righteousness ;
They shall be well supplied and fed
With living streams and living bread.
- 5 Bless'd are the men whose bowels move
And melt with sympathetic love ;
From *Christ* the Lord shall they obtain
Like sympathy and love again.
- 6 Bless'd are the pure, whose hearts are clean
From the defiling powers of sin ;
With endless pleasure they shall see
A *God* of spotless purity.
- 7 Bless'd are the men of peaceful life,
Who quench the coals of growing strife ;
They shall be call'd the heirs of bliss,
The sons of *God*, the *God* of peace.
- 8 Bless'd are the sufferers, who partake
Of pain and shame for *Jesus'* sake ;

- 4 Have we not found our envy grow,
To hear another's praise ?
Nor robb'd him of his honour due,
By fly malicious ways ?
- 5 In all we sell, and all we buy,
Is justice our design ?
Do we remember *God* is nigh,
And fear the wrath divine ?
- 6 In vain we talk of *Jesus'* blood,
And boast his name in vain,
If we can flight the laws of *God*,
And prove unjust to men.



FIDELITY.

- 1 **L**ET those who bear the Christian name,
Their holy vows fulfil ;
The saints, the followers of the lamb,
Are men of honour still.
- 2 True to the solemn oaths they take,
Though to their hurt they swear ;
Constant and just to all they speak,
For *God* and angels hear.
- 3 Still with their lips, their hearts agree,
Nor flattering words devise :
They know the *God* of truth can see
Through every false disguise.
- 4 They hate the appearance of a lie,
In all the shapes it wears ;
Firm to the truth : and when they die
Eternal life is theirs.



II.

- 1 *WHILE* some in folly's pleasure roll,
 And seek the joys which hurt the soul ;
 Be mine, that silent calm repast,
 A peaceful conscience to the last.
- 2 That tree which bears immortal fruit,
 Without a canker at the root ;
 That friend, who never fails the just,
 When other friends desert their trust.
- 3 With this companion in the shade,
 My soul no more shall be dismay'd ;
 I will not fear the midnight gloom,
 Nor the pale monarch of the tomb.
- 4 Tho' heav'n afflict I'll not repine ;
 The noblest comforts still are mine ;
 Comforts which shall o'er death prevail,
 And journey with me thro' the vale.
- 5 Amidst the various scene of ills,
 Each stroke some kind design fulfils ;
 And shall I murmur at my *God*,
 When sov'reign love directs the rod ?
- 6 His hand shall smoothe my rugged way,
 And lead me to the realms of day ;
 To milder skies, and brighter plains,
 Where everlasting pleasure reigns.



III.

- 1 *MR* soul, before thy maker bow ;
His wondrous works admire,
Till rev'rence and religious awe
Thine inmost thoughts inspire.
- 2 With humble trust dismiss thy cares,
And on his love depend ;
Leave him to manage thine affairs,
To him thyself commend.
- 3 Let high esteem affection raise,
Devotion warm thy breast ;
Let thankful love excite thy praise ;
In him alone be blest.
- 4 To him thy solemn homage pay ;
His constant aid implore ;
Give thanks for mercies ev'ry day,
And thus prepare for more.
- 5 Without reserve to him submit ;
All his commands fulfil ;
Acknowledge all his actions fit,
Nor ere oppose his will.

THE END.

