

the allusions to the honey-comb and its sweetness in several parts of the sacred writings. See 1 Samuel 14:27; Psalm 19:10; Proverbs 5:3; Proverbs 16:24; Proverbs 27:7; Song of Solomon 4:11; Song of Solomon 5:1; and the place before us.

Verse 14

So shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul - True religion, experimental godliness, shall be to thy soul as the honey-comb is to thy mouth.

Then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off - This is precisely the same with that in Proverbs 23:18 (note), where see the note. The word אָרִיז (acharith), we translate in the former place an end, and here we translate it a reward; but there is no place I believe in the sacred writings in which it has any such acceptation; nor can such a meaning be deduced from the root אָרִיז (achar), which always refers to behind, after, extremity, latter part, time, etc., but never carries the idea of recompense, compensation, or such like; nor has one of the versions understood it so. There is another state or life, and thy expectation of happiness in a future world shall not be cut off. In this sense the versions all understood it. I will take them as they lie before me.

â€œWhich (wisdom) when thou shalt have found, thou shalt have hope in thy last days; and thy hope shall not perish.â€ - Vulgate.

â€œAnd if thou find it, thou shalt have a good death; and hope shall not forsake thee.â€ - Septuagint.

â€œWhich, if thou have found, thy latter days shall be better than the former; and thy hope shall not be consumed.â€ - Chaldee.

â€œThere shall be an end, and thy hope shall not be cut off.â€ - Syriac.

â€œFor, if thou shalt find her, (wisdom), thy death shall be glorious, and thy hope will not fail thee.â€ - Arabic. Whiche whan thou fyndist schalt han in the last thingis, hope: and thin hope schal not perischen - Old MS. Bible.

â€œAnd there is Good Hope; yee that hope shal not be in vayne.â€ - Coverdale.

This rendering is indefinite, which is not the usual custom of the translator.

Verse 15

The dwelling of the righteous - צַדִּיק (tsaddik), the man who is walking unblameably in all the testimonies of God; who is rendering to every man his due.

Verse 16

For a just man - צַדִּיק (tsaddik), the righteous, the same person mentioned above.

Falleth seven times - Gets very often into distresses through his resting place being spoiled by the wicked man, the robber, the spoiler of the desert, lying in wait for this purpose, Proverbs 24:15.

And riseth up again - Though God permit the hand of violence sometimes to spoil his tent, temptations to assail his mind, and afflictions to press down his body, he constantly emerges; and every time he passes through the furnace, he comes out brighter and more refined.

But the wicked shall fall into mischief - And there they shall lie; having no strong arm to uphold them. Yet,

Verse 17

Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, (into this mischief), and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth - When he meets with any thing that injures him; for God will not have thee to avenge thyself, or feel any disposition contrary to love; for if thou do, the Lord will be angry, and may turn away his wrath from him, and pour it out on thee.

This I believe to be the true sense of these verses: but we must return to the sixteenth, as that has been most sinfully misrepresented.

For a just man falleth seven times - That is, say many, â€œthe most righteous man in the world sins seven times a day on an average.â€ Solomon does not say so: -

1. There is not a word about sin in the text.

2. The word day is not in the Hebrew text, nor in any of the versions.

3. The word יָפֵל (yippol), from נָפַל (naphal), to fall, is never applied to sin.

4. When set in opposition to the words riseth up, it merely applies to affliction or calamity. See Micah 7:8; Amos 8:4; Jeremiah 25:27; and Psalm 34:19, Psalm 34:20. â€œThe righteous falls into trouble.â€ See above.

Mr. Holden has a very judicious note on this passage: "Injure not a righteous man; for, though he frequently falls into distress, yet, by the superintending care of Providence, he riseth up again," is delivered from his distress, while the wicked are overwhelmed with their misfortunes. That this is the meaning is plain from the preceding and following verses: yet some expound it by the just man often relapsing into sin, and recovering from it; nay, it has even been adduced to prove the doctrine of the final perseverance of the elect. But *שׁוּב* is never used for falling into sin, but into distress and affliction - as Proverbs 11:5, Proverbs 11:14; Proverbs 13:17; Proverbs 17:20; Proverbs 26:27; Proverbs 28:10, Proverbs 28:14, Proverbs 28:18."

Verse 18

And he turn away his wrath from him - Wrath is here taken for the effect of wrath, punishment; and the meaning must be as paraphrased above - lest he take the punishment from him, and inflict it upon thee. And in this way Coverdale understood it: "Lest the Lord be angry, and turn his wrath from him unto thee." Or we may understand it thus: Lest the Lord inflict on thee a similar punishment; for if thou get into his spirit, rejoicing in the calamities of another, thou deservest punishment.

Verse 20

For there shall be no reboord to the evil man - *אֵין עֲשׂוֹתָא* (acharith). There shall not be the future state of blessedness to the wicked. See the note on Proverbs 24:14 (note). His candle shall be put out; his prosperity shall finally cease, or he shall have no posterity. Some have thought that this text intimates the annihilation of sinners; but it refers not to being, but to the state or condition of that being. The wicked shall be; but they shall not be Happy.

Verse 21

My son, fear thou the Lord and the king - Pay to each the homage due: to the Lord, Divine honor and adoration; to the king, civil respect, civil honor, and political obedience.

Meddle not with them that are given to change - *אַל תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶת הַשֹּׁמֵרִים* (im shonim al titharab): "And with the changelings mingle not thyself." The innovators; those who are always for making experiments on modes of government, forms of religion, etc. The most dangerous spirit that can infect the human mind.

Verse 22

The ruin of them both? - Of them who do not fear the Lord; and of them that do not reverence the King.

Verse 23

These things also belong to the wise - *גַּם אֵלֶּה לַחַחַמִּים* (gam elleh lachachamim), "These also to wise." This appears to be a new section; and perhaps, what follows belongs to another collection. Probably fragments of sayings collected by wise men from the Proverbs of Solomon.

It is not good to have respect - Judgment and justice should never be perverted.

Verse 26

Kiss his lips - Shall treat him with affection and respect.

Verse 27

Prepare thy work without - Do nothing without a plan. In winter prepare seed, implements, tackle, geers, etc., for seed-time and harvest.

Verse 28

Be not a witness - Do not be forward to offer thyself to bear testimony against a neighbor, in a matter which may prejudice him, where the essential claims of justice do not require such interference; and especially do not do this in a spirit of revenge, because he has injured thee before.

Verse 30

I went by the field of the slothful - This is a most instructive parable; is exemplified every day in a variety of forms; and is powerfully descriptive of the state of many a blackslider and trifler in religion. Calmet has an excellent note on this passage. I shall give the substance of it.

Solomon often recommends diligence and economy to his disciples. In those primitive times when agriculture was honorable, no man was respected who neglected to cultivate his grounds, who sunk into poverty, contracted debt, or engaged in ruinous securities. With great propriety, a principal part of wisdom was

considered by them as consisting in the knowledge of properly conducting one's domestic affairs, and duly cultivating the inheritances derived from their ancestors. Moses had made a law to prevent the rich from utterly depressing the poor, by obliging them to return their farms to them on the Sabbatic year, and to remit all debts at the year of jubilee.

In the civil state of the Hebrews, we never see those enormous and suddenly raised fortunes, which never subsist but in the ruin of numberless families. One of the principal solicitudes of this legislator was to produce, as far as possible in a monarchical state, an equality of property and condition. The ancient Romans held agriculture in the same estimation, and highly respected those who had applied themselves to it with success. When they spoke in praise of a man, they considered themselves as giving no mean commendation when they called him a good husbandman, an excellent laborer. From such men they formed their most valiant generals and intrepid soldiers. Cato De Re Rustica, cap. 1. The property which is acquired by these means is most innocent, most solid, and exposes its possessor less to envy than property acquired in any other way. See Cicero De Officiis, lib. 1. In Britain the merchant is all in all; and yet the waves of the sea are not more uncertain, nor more tumultuous, than the property acquired in this way, or than the agitated life of the speculative merchant.

But let us look more particularly into this very instructive parable: -

I. The owner is described.

- 1. He was ish atsel, the loitering, sluggish, slothful man.
- 2. He was adam chasar leb, a man that wanted heart; destitute of courage, alacrity, and decision of mind.

II. His circumstances. This man had,

- 1. sadeh, a sowed field, arable ground. This was the character of his estate. It was meadow and corn land.
- 2. He had kerem, a vineyard, what we would call perhaps garden and orchard, where he might employ his skill to great advantage in raising various kinds of fruits and culinary herbs for the support of his family.

III. The state of this heritage:

- 1. It was grown over with thorns. It had been long neglected, so that even brambles were permitted to grow in the fields:
- 2. Nettles had covered the face thereof. It was not weeded, and all kinds of rubbish had been suffered to multiply:
- 3. The stone wall was broken down. This belonged to the vineyard: it was neither pruned nor digged; and the fence, for want of timely repairs, had all fallen into ruins, Proverbs 24:31.

IV. The effect all this had on the attentive observer.

- 1. I saw it, echezeh anochi, I fixed my attention on it. I found it was no mere report. It is a fact. I myself was an eyewitness of it.
- 2. I considered it well, ashith libbi, I put my heart on it. All my feelings were interested.
- 3. I looked upon it, raithi, I took an intellectual view of it. And
- 4. Thus I received instruction, lakachti musar, I received a very important lesson from it: but the owner paid no attention to it. He alone was uninstructed; for he slumbered, slept, and kept his hands in his bosom. Proverbs 24:33. Hugged himself in his sloth and carelessness.

V. The consequences of this conduct.

- 1. Poverty described as coming like a traveler, making sure steps every hour coming nearer and nearer to the door.
- 2. Want, machsor, total destitution; want of all the necessaries, conveniences, and comforts of life; and this is described as coming like an armed man keish Magen, as a man with a shield, who comes to destroy this unprofitable servant: or it may refer to a man coming with what we call an execution into the house, armed with the law, to take even his bed from the slumberer.

From this literal solution any minister of God may make a profitable discourse.