

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

Farther exhortations to acquire wisdom, Proverbs 5:1, Proverbs 5:2. The character of a loose woman, and the ruinous consequences of attachment to such, Proverbs 5:3-14. Exhortations to chastity and moderation, Proverbs 5:15-21. The miserable end of the wicked, Proverbs 5:22, Proverbs 5:23.

Verse 1

Attend unto my wisdom - Take the following lessons from my own experience.

Verse 3

The lips of a strange woman - One that is not thy own, whether Jewess or heathen.

Drop as a honey-comb - She uses the most deceitful, flattering, and alluring speeches: as the droppings of the honey out of the comb are the sweetest of all.

Verse 4

Bitter as wormwood - כֶּסֶם כֶּסֶם (Kelanah), like the detestable herb wormwood, or something analogous to it: something as excessive in its bitterness, as honey is in its sweetness.

Verse 5

Her feet go down to death - She first, like a serpent, infuses her poison, by which the whole constitution of her paramour is infected, which soon or late brings on death.

Her steps take hold on hell - First, the death of the body; and then the damnation of the soul. These are the tendencies of connections with such women.

Verse 6

Lest thou shouldest ponder - To prevent thee from reflecting on thy present conduct, and its consequences, her ways are moveable - she continually varies her allurements.

Thou canst not know them - It is impossible to conceive all her tricks and wiles: to learn these in all their varieties, is a part of the science first taught in that infernal trade.

Verse 7

Hear me - O ye children - בָּנִים (banim), sons, young men in general: for these are the most likely to be deceived and led astray.

Verse 8

Come not nigh the door of her house - Where there are generally such exhibitions as have a natural tendency to excite impure thoughts, and irregular passions.

Verse 9

Lest thou give thine honor - The character of a debauchee is universally detested: by this, even those of noble blood lose their honor and respect.

Thy years unto the cruel - Though all the blandishments of love dwell on the tongue, and the excess of fondness appear in the whole demeanor of the harlot and the prostitute; yet cruelty has its throne in their hearts; and they will rob and murder (when it appears to answer their ends) those who give their strength, their wealth, and their years to them. The unfaithful wife has often murdered her own husband for the sake of her paramour, and has given him over to justice in order to save herself. Murders have often taken place in brothels, as well as robberies; for the vice of prostitution is one of the parents of cruelty.

Verse 11

When thy flesh and thy body are consumed - The word שָׁרָה (shear), which we render body, signifies properly the remains, residue, or remnant of a thing: and is applied here to denote the breathing carcass, putrid with the concomitant disease of debauchery: a public reproach which the justice of God entails on this species of iniquity. The mourning here spoken of is of the most excessive kind: the word נָחַם (naham) is often applied to the growling of a lion, and the hoarse incessant murmuring of the sea. In the line of my duty, I have been often called to attend the death-bed of such persons, where groans and shrieks were incessant through the

Verse 14

In the midst of the congregation and assembly - In the mydel of the Curche and of the Synagoge - Old MS. Bible. Such persons, however sacred the place, carry about with them eyes full of adultery, which cannot cease from sin.

Verse 15

Drink waters out of thine own cistern - Be satisfied with thy own wife; and let the wife see that she reverence her husband; and not tempt him by inattention or unkindness to seek elsewhere what he has a right to expect, but cannot find, at home.

Verse 16

Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad - Let thy children lawfully begotten be numerous.

Verse 17

Let them be only thine own - The off-spring of a legitimate connection; a bastard brood, however numerous, is no credit to any man.

Verse 18

Let thy fountain be blessed - **xTMxTM xžxšx•xTMxš x'xTMxš** (yehi mekorecha baruch). Sit vena tua benedicta. Thy vein; that which carries off streams from the fountain of animal life, in order to disperse them abroad, and through the streets. How delicate and correct is the allusion here! But anatomical allusions must not be pressed into detail in a commentary on Scripture.

Verse 19

The loving hind and pleasant roe - By **x•xTMxœx^a** (aiyeleth), the deer; by **xTMxçxœx[”]** (yaalah), the ibex or mountain goat, may be meant.

Let her breasts satisfy thee - As the infant is satisfied with the breasts of its mother; so shouldst thou be with the wife of thy youth.

Verse 21

For the ways of a man - Whether they are public or private, God sees all the steps thou takest in life.

Verse 22

He shall be holden with the cords of his sins - Most people who follow unlawful pleasures, think they can give them up whenever they please; but sin repeated becomes customary; custom soon engenders habit; and habit in the end assumes the form of necessity; the man becomes bound with his own cords, and so is led captive by the devil at his will.

Verse 23

He shall die without instruction - This is most likely, and it is a general case; but even these may repent and live.