

# CHAPTER 3

## INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 3

In this chapter, Wisdom, or Christ, delivers out some fresh lessons and instructions to his children; as not to forget his doctrine, but heartily attend to his precepts and ordinances, seeing these are the means of lengthening out their days, and of enjoying peace, (<sup><A081></sup>Proverbs 3:1,2); as well as had the promise of the mercy and truth of God, and the continuance of them, annexed to them; and therefore are exhorted to keep close to them, and show the greatest value and affection for them, which was the way to find favour with, and to be taken notice of by, God and man, (<sup><A088></sup>Proverbs 3:3,4); and then he proceeds to exhort them to a hearty trust in the Lord, without dependence on themselves; and to seek direction from him in every step they took, which they might expect to have, (<sup><A085></sup>Proverbs 3:5,6); to humility and the fear of God, and fleeing from evil, which they would find would much contribute to their health, (<sup><A086></sup>Proverbs 3:7,8); to liberality in supporting the worship of God, and the interest of religion, which would turn to account and profit to them, (<sup><A089></sup>Proverbs 3:9,10); to patience in bearing the chastisement of the Lord, as coming from a loving father, (<sup><A081></sup>Proverbs 3:11,12); then follows a commendation of wisdom, and the happiness of the man possessed of it is declared, (<sup><A083></sup>Proverbs 3:13); from the profit, preciousness, pleasure, and usefulness of it, (<sup><A084></sup>Proverbs 3:14-18); and from its concern in the works of creation and providence, (<sup><A089></sup>Proverbs 3:19,20); and from that comfort, honour, safety, and security, which come by the doctrines and instructions of Wisdom, and a steady regard to them, (<sup><A082></sup>Proverbs 3:21-26); and the chapter is concluded with exhortations to beneficence, charity, concord, and peace with neighbours, (<sup><A087></sup>Proverbs 3:27-30); and to shun the ways of wicked men, urged from the different state and condition of wicked men and fools, and of the just, the lowly, and wise, (<sup><A081></sup>Proverbs 3:31-35).

**Ver. 1.** *My son, forget not my law*, etc.] Or, “doctrine”<sup>f53</sup>; the doctrine of Christ, the Gospel, and the several truths of it; which, being of the utmost moment and importance, should be kept in memory, and not let slip, or be in the least slighted and neglected; see (<sup><A081></sup>Hebrews 2:1-3);

*but let thine heart keep my commandments*; as the ark, or chest, kept the two tables of the law put into it; it denotes a cordial affection for the commandments and ordinances of Christ, a hearty attention and obedience to them, and a constant and cheerful observance of them, flowing from love and gratitude to him, (<sup><B445></sup>John 14:15,21).

**Ver. 2.** *For length of days, and long life*, etc.] Or, “years of life”, or “lives”<sup>f54</sup>; a long life of usefulness and comfort here, and eternal life hereafter: the law of Moses promised a long life to the observers of it; but the Gospel of Christ brings an immortal life to light and promises to all believers in him that they shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life. “Length of days for ever and ever” was asked by Christ of his Father, (<sup><A2104></sup>Psalms 21:4), and given him, and is in his right hand, (<sup><A1816></sup>Proverbs 3:16); it is in his power to give, and he does give it to all his children, people, and followers, (<sup><A2104></sup>Psalms 21:4 <sup><B17D></sup>John 17:2);

*and peace shall they add to thee*; the Gospel is the Gospel of peace, which not only proclaims peace by the blood of Christ; but the doctrines of it, such as justification by the righteousness of Christ, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, are the means of giving and increasing spiritual peace in the hearts of believers; and so are the ordinances of Christ, which in (<sup><A1817></sup>Proverbs 3:17); are called, for that reason, “paths of peace”; (see <sup><B101></sup>Romans 5:1,11 <sup><B916></sup>Psalms 119:165).

**Ver. 3.** *Let not mercy and truth forsake thee*, etc.] Or, forsake not them, and the exercise of them; show “mercy” to fellow creatures, to sinful men, to the bodies of men, by relieving their wants; and to their souls, by pitying and praying for them, and by giving them wholesome counsel and advice: to fellow Christians, sympathize with them in their troubles, put on bowels of compassion, be tenderhearted, and forgive offences; and, in a spirit of meekness, restore backsliders, for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice. Attend to “truth”; exercise faith on the Lord; cast not away your confidence; speak truth to your neighbour and brother; and hold fast the truth of the Gospel, and never depart from it. Though many interpreters understand this by way of promise, and as an encouragement to regard the doctrines and ordinances of Christ, rendering the words, “mercy and truth shall not forsake thee”<sup>f55</sup>; meaning the mercy and truth of God; the “mercy” of God in forgiving sin, in sympathizing under affliction, in helping in time of need, in supplying with all needful grace, and in bringing to eternal life; for the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that

fear him, (<sup><A317></sup>Psalm 103:17); the “truth” of God, his faithfulness in performing promises, never fails; the unbelief of man cannot make it of no effect; though we believe not, he abides faithful and true to every word of his; not one shall fail, or pass away; all shall be fulfilled; (see <sup><A883></sup>Psalm 89:33 <sup><A883></sup>Romans 3:3,4 <sup><A883></sup>2 Timothy 2:13); “all [his] paths [are] mercy and truth”, and he never goes out of them, (<sup><A250></sup>Psalm 25:10);

*bind them about thy neck*; as chains for ornament: not mercy and truth, just before mentioned, as may seem at first sight; but the law and commandments of wisdom, (<sup><A101></sup>Proverbs 3:1); or the doctrines and ordinances of Christ; (see <sup><A108></sup>Proverbs 1:8,9); reckon it as your greatest honour, glory, and beauty, that you steadfastly adhere to these things; nothing makes a believer look more lovely in conversation than a close regard to the truths of Christ, and a constant walking in his ordinances;

*write them upon the table of thine heart*; do not forget them, keep them in memory, and always retain a hearty affection for them; it is the Spirit’s work to write them in the heart; and when they are there written, it is the work of saints, under a divine influence, to copy them over in life, and to show by their conduct and behaviour that they are written there; (see <sup><A883></sup>Jeremiah 31:33 <sup><A883></sup>2 Corinthians 3:3). The allusion, in both phrases, is to the directions given about the law of Moses, (<sup><A883></sup>Deuteronomy 6:8, 9); and to the writing of his law on tables of stone: and it was usual with the ancients, in later times, to write on tables of wood; Solon’s laws were written on tables of wood<sup>f56</sup>; and such were the “tabellae et pugillares” of the Romans, made of box, beech, and other sorts of wood, covered with wax, on which they wrote; (see Gill on “<sup><A883></sup>Habakkuk 2:2”); but Solomon would have his law written on the fleshly tables of the heart, (<sup><A883></sup>2 Corinthians 3:3).

**Ver. 4.** *So shall thou find favour*, etc.] Or “grace”<sup>f57</sup>; the grace of God, and larger measures of it; as Noah did, (<sup><A883></sup>Genesis 6:8); which are communicated to men when in the way of their duty: or good will, esteem, and respect, among men; as Joseph had with Potiphar, and the keeper of the prison, (<sup><A883></sup>Genesis 39:4,21);

*and good understanding in the sight of God and man*; as Christ, as man, had in the sight of both, (<sup><A102></sup>Luke 2:52); that is, to be taken notice of, regarded, and approved by both. Some render it “good success”<sup>f58</sup>; prosperity in things temporal and spiritual; (see <sup><A883></sup>Psalm 111:10). There is something lovely, and of good report, in a close attention to the doctrines

and duties of religion; which make a man amiable in the sight of others, and which is followed with a blessing from the Lord.

**Ver. 5.** *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart*, etc.] Not in a creature, the best, the holiest, and the highest; not in any creature enjoyment, as riches, strength, and wisdom; nor in any outward privilege, arising from natural descent and education; not in a man's self, in his own heart, which is deceitful; nor in any works of righteousness done by him; not in a profession of religion, or the duties of it, ever so well performed; not in frames, nor in graces, and the exercise of them; no, not in faith or trust itself: but in the Lord, the object of all grace, and in him only; in Jehovah the Father, as the God of nature and providence, for all temporal blessings; and as the God of all grace, for all spiritual blessings, and all the needful supplies of grace; and for eternal happiness, which he has provided, promised, and freely gives. Trust in him at all times; in times of affliction, temptation, and darkness: there is a great deal of reason for it; all power and strength are in him to help; his love, grace, and mercy, move him to it, and are always the same: the consideration of what he has done for others that have trusted in him, and for ourselves in times past, should induce and encourage to it; as also the happiness of those that trust in him, who enjoy peace and safety; and his displeasure at those that show any diffidence of him, or distrust him. Trust in Jehovah the Son; in his person for acceptance; in his righteousness for justification; in his blood for pardon; in his fulness for supply; in his power for protection and preservation; and in him alone for salvation and eternal life. Trust in Jehovah the Spirit, to carry on and finish the work of grace upon the heart; of which a saint may be confident that where it is begun it will be completed. And this trust in Father, Son, and Spirit, should be "with all the heart", cordial and sincere. The phrase denotes not so much the strength of faith as the sincerity of it; it signifies a faith unfeigned; it is not saying, or professing, that a man believes and trusts in the Lord; but it is with the heart, and with his whole heart, that he believes unto righteousness, if he believes aright; (see <5100>Romans 10:10 <4857>Acts 8:37);

*and lean not unto thine own understanding*; or trust not to that; for it stands opposed to trusting in the Lord. Men should not depend upon their own wisdom and understanding, in the conduct of civil life, but should seek the direction and blessing of Providence, or otherwise will meet with disappointment; and, when they succeed, should ascribe it not to their own prudence and wisdom, but to the goodness of God; for "bread" is not

always “to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding”, (<sup>2011</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:11); and much less should men lean to their own understanding in matters of religion; a natural man has no understanding of spiritual things, of the things of the Gospel, nor indeed any practical understanding of things moral, (<sup>811</sup>Romans 3:11 <sup>414</sup>1 Corinthians 2:14) (<sup>202</sup>Jeremiah 4:22). The understanding of man is darkened by sin; yea, is darkness itself; it is like the first earth, covered with darkness, till light is let into it, and therefore not to be leaned unto and depended on, (<sup>408</sup>Ephesians 4:18 5:8). There is a necessity of a new heart and spirit, of an understanding to be given, in order to understand spiritual and divine things, (<sup>236</sup>Ezekiel 36:26 <sup>611</sup>1 John 5:20); for though these are not contrary to the reason and understanding of men; yet they are above them, and cannot be discovered, reached, comprehended, and accounted for by them, (<sup>467</sup>Matthew 16:17 <sup>611</sup>John 3:4,9). Nay, there are some things in the Gospel, which, though plain to an enlightened understanding by the word of God, yet the manner how they are cannot be apprehended: as the doctrines of a trinity of Persons; of the generation of the Son of God; the procession of the Spirit; the union of the two natures in Christ; the resurrection of the dead, etc. In short, not our reason and understanding at best, and much less as carnal and unsanctified, but the word of God only is our rule of judgment, and the standard of our faith and practice; and to that we should have recourse and be directed by it, and not lean to our own understandings.

**Ver. 6.** *In all thy ways acknowledge him*, etc.] Or “know him”<sup>f59</sup>; the Lord: set him before thee; have him always in view; consider him as ever present with thee, observing every step thou takest; and take not one step without his leave, and without his advice; ask wisdom of him who gives liberally; consult his word, and make the Scriptures thy counsellors, or the men of thy counsel, as in (<sup>131</sup>Psalm 119:24); take him as your guide; observe the footsteps of his providence; follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes; walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; when things go cross and adverse, and not to your mind, submit to his sovereignty; and be still and know that he is God, that does all things right, for his own glory and his people’s good, (<sup>1960</sup>Psalm 46:10); and when things succeed, give him the glory of all; own his hand in it, and the bounty of it; acknowledge that all you have, in providence and grace, come from him;

*and he shall direct thy paths*; man cannot direct his own; no, not a man: this is a blessing from the Lord; who steps of his people, keeps the feet of

his saints, and directs them aright in things temporal and spiritual, (<sup><24123></sup>Jeremiah 10:23 <sup><18723></sup>Psalms 37:23 <sup><9119></sup>1 Samuel 2:9).

**Ver. 7.** *Be not wise in thine own eyes*, etc.] So as to act independently of God; not to trust in him, nor acknowledge him, nor seek to him for help and direction; nor ask nor take the advice of others; but, being conceited and self-sufficient, lean to thine own understanding, as being wise enough to conduct all affairs in life by thy own discretion; and in matters of religion wiser than thy teachers, and even than the Scriptures, being wise above that which is written; pleasing thyself with thine own wisdom, as exceeding others; glorying in it as thine own acquisition, and not ascribing it to God, so far as it any ways deserves the name of wisdom; though for the most part that which men glory in, and are conceited of, is not wisdom, but folly; and at least it is their folly to boast of it and be elated with it; (see <sup><23121></sup>Isaiah 5:21) (<sup><45216></sup>Romans 12:16);

*fear the Lord*; which is true wisdom; and, where this is not, there is none, let men be ever so conceited; and where this is there is humility; these two go together, and make a man wise, rich, and honourable, (<sup><21214></sup>Proverbs 22:4). The fear of the Lord is opposed to pride, high-mindedness, and vain conceit, (<sup><45120></sup>Romans 11:20); this includes reverence of God, faith in him, dependence on him, acknowledgment of him, seeking to him for direction, and carefulness not to offend him;

*and depart from evil*; from the evil of self-confidence and self-conceit, and from all other evil; the fear of God influences men to avoid sin, and abstain from all appearance of it; by means and through the exercise of it men forsake it, and keep at a distance from it, (<sup><21166></sup>Proverbs 16:6). Nehemiah could not do as others did, because of the fear of the Lord; and Job was a man that feared God, and therefore he avoided that which was evil, (<sup><14515></sup>Nehemiah 5:15 <sup><18101></sup>Job 1:1).

**Ver. 8.** *It shall be health to thy navel*, etc.] That part of the body which is the knot of the intestines; and may be put for the bowels and inward parts, which being sound, the body is in health; and these may be put for the whole body: and so the Septuagint version renders it, “to thy body”; and this may be put for the whole person. And the sense is, either wisdom, as Jarchi; the doctrine of wisdom, the Gospel; which teaches men to trust in the Lord, and not in themselves, to apply to him for wisdom, and not lean to their own understanding; this contributes much to a man’s spiritual health and welfare: or else the fear of the Lord is of this use to men, both in

soul and body; since by it they depart from those sins which bring diseases upon the body; and are influenced by it to the exercise of such graces, and the discharge of such duties, as are the means of keeping the soul in good plight;

*and marrow to thy bones*; or, “watering”<sup>f60</sup> to them: that which irrigates and moistens them, and makes and keeps them strong and solid: (see ~~<8224>~~ Job 21:24). What marrow is to the bones, that is wisdom, or the fear of God, to the souls of men; the means of establishing and strengthening them against sin, and snares and temptations, and to do the will and work of God.

**Ver. 9.** *Honour the Lord with thy substance*, etc.] Or, “out of thy substance”<sup>f61</sup>; for as it should be a man’s own that he gives, and not another’s, and therefore called “thy substance”; or, as the Septuagint version, “out of thy just labours”, what is righteously and lawfully gotten, and not by fraud and oppression; so it is only a part of it, and not all, that is required; what in proportion to his substance can be prudently spared, and is sufficient and suitable to the call in Providence. A man’s “substance” are his wealth and riches; his “mammon”, as the Targum; which, in comparison of heavenly things, indeed have no substance in them: yet these are worldly substance, and of account; and as with these God has honoured men, they should honour him with them again, by giving to the poor, especially his poor saints; for as an oppressing of them is a reproaching of him, so having mercy on them is honouring him, (~~<2048>~~ Proverbs 14:31); and especially by contributing to the support of his worship, the keeping up the interest and credit of religion, and for the spread of the Gospel; and chiefly by communicating to the ministers of it, giving them the “double honour” which is due to them, and which, when given them, the Lord takes as done to himself, as an honouring him, (~~<5457>~~ 1 Timothy 5:17);

*and with the firstfruits of all thine increase*; or, “out of the chief of all thine increase”<sup>f62</sup>; God must have the best, and in the first place. The allusion is either to the maintenance of the priests and Levites under the law, and the manner of doing it; which, among other things, was out of the annual produce of the earth, and the firstfruits of it; and may respect the comfortable support of Gospel ministers under the present dispensation; (see ~~<4193>~~ 1 Corinthians 9:13,14); or to the firstfruits of every kind offered to the Lord, and to the feast kept sacred to him at the ingathering the fruits of the earth, (~~<8230>~~ Leviticus 23:10,17,39); and even among the Heathens

formerly were something of the same kind. Aristotle says<sup>f63</sup> the ancient sacrifices and assemblies were instituted as firstfruits, after the gathering of the fruits, at which time especially they ceased from working.

**Ver. 10.** *So shall thy barns be filled with plenty*, etc.] With plenty of corn; so that there will be a sufficient provision of bread for the eater for the ensuing year, and of seed for the sower when the time of sowing returns; so far should they be, it suggests, from being losers by honouring the Lord with their substance, that they should be gainers by it; instead of having less, should have abundantly more;

*and thy presses shall burst out with new wine*; not that they should really burst<sup>f64</sup> for then the wine would be spilled, which would be a loss; but that they should be so full, that they should be ready to burst or run over: and so the Targum, and the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, “and thy presses shall overflow with new wine”. As the former clause denotes plenty of eatables, so this of drinkables; and both fulness of all sorts of provisions, promised to the liberal man; and may be an emblem of the large provisions of grace and glory, which the Lord has made for and bestows upon such that honour him.

messes”.

**Ver. 11.** *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord*, etc.] This seems to be introduced to prevent an objection that may be made to the above promise of plenty; seeing the children of God are often afflicted in this world; even the wise and pious, and those that fear the Lord, and honour him; which is accounted for, and the reason of it given, in (<sup>3182</sup>Proverbs 3:12). These words are cited in (<sup>3825</sup>Hebrews 12:5,6), and are represented as an exhortation, spoken unto children, the children of God; by which it appears, that not any single person is meant by “my son”; and, as not here, so neither elsewhere in this book, where the same phrase is used. It is not to be limited to any son of Solomon’s according to the flesh; nor to any person or persons, that applied to him for instruction, and were taught by him; nor to all the people of God in his time: but it has respect to the Jews in the times of the apostles; and even to all the children of God in all ages, who more or less endure afflictions, here called “the chastening of the Lord”, because they are from him; whatever concern men or devils, or second causes, may have in them, they are originally from the Lord, either sent or suffered by him; they are indeed by his appointment, and are ordered, limited, and restrained by him, and are overruled for his glory and



his people's good: they are not chastisements in a way of vindictive wrath and justice, which would be contrary to the satisfaction of Christ, the justice of God, his everlasting and unchangeable love, and to his word and oath; but they are in love; they are the chastisements of a father, in which he deals with them as with children; and uses them for the good discipline and instruction of them, as the word <sup>f65</sup> here signifies; and therefore not to be "despised", or loathed and abhorred, as disagreeable food or physic be; or as if they were unnecessary and unprofitable, or unworthy of notice and regard; or as little, slight, and trifling things, without considering from whence they come and for what they are sent; but, on the contrary, should be regarded as useful and serviceable; (see ~~<RB7>~~ Job 5:17);

*neither be weary of his correction*; "rebuke" or "reproof"<sup>f66</sup>; so in (~~<S125>~~ Hebrews 12:5); "when thou art rebuked of him", not in wrath and fury, but in love, as before. The same thing is meant by correction as chastening; and supposes a fault to be committed by him that is corrected, for God corrects none but for sin; and authority in the corrector, which he, as the Father of spirits, and as our covenant God and Father in Christ, has a right to do: he corrects by his Spirit, by his word, by his ministers, and by his providences, afflictive ones, which last is here meant; and it is always for good, at a proper time, and when necessary, in measure and with judgment: and of this the children should not be "weary", as grievous and intolerable; and especially should not be weary of their lives on account of it, in which sense the word is used in (~~<O246>~~ Genesis 27:46) which has been the case of Job and others; but should bear it quietly and peaceably, and with patience, without fretting and murmuring; or should not "faint", as it is rendered in (~~<S125>~~ Hebrews 12:5); or sink under the weight, but cheerfully support under it. The two extremes, which men are apt to run into, are here guarded against; on the one hand, to make little or nothing of an affliction; to outbrave it, not to be affected with it, nor humble under the mighty hand of God; nor consider the rod, and him that has appointed it: and, on the other hand, to aggravate an affliction, as if no sorrow was like theirs, and to be quite dejected and overwhelmed with it.

**Ver. 12.** *For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth*, etc.] This is a reason why the children of God should not despise corrections, nor be weary of them; since they spring from love, are given in love, nor is there any abatement of it in them: when the Lord chastens and corrects, he does not take away his lovingkindness from them; yea, it is because he loves them

that therefore he thus deals with them; wherefore they ought to be patiently bore, and kindly taken by them;

*even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth*; as a father chastens and corrects his son, whom he dearly loves, and has the greatest pleasure in, so the Lord chastens and corrects his people; (see <sup><4885></sup>Deuteronomy 8:5). There is such a relation subsisting between them as that of father and son, which flows from the inexpressible love of God to them; and which is a love of complacency and delight in them, and is invariable and unchangeable, and continues the same under all their afflictions; as appears by what he does for them in them, and by the issue of them; he knows their souls in adversity, and chooses them in the furnace of affliction; he pays love visits to them, and comforts them under all their tribulation; he sympathizes with them, and supports them; he makes their bed in their affliction, and delivers out of it, or takes them to himself: the issue is always his own glory, and their good.

**Ver. 13.** *Happy [is] the man [that] findeth wisdom*, etc.] Some connect these words with the preceding; as if the sense was, a good man, though he is chastened by the Lord, yet is a happy man; not only because his chastenings are in love and for good, but because he improves in spiritual knowledge and understanding by them; (see <sup><4942></sup>Psalms 94:12). Aben Ezra connects them with the former, but in a different manner, thus; “happy is the man that findeth wisdom”, for by it he keeps from sinning, that chastisements may not come upon him. But rather the argument in praise of wisdom, and the advantages of it, insisted on in the preceding chapter, is resumed here and enlarged upon; and by wisdom is meant Christ, and a saving knowledge of him by means of his Gospel; and “finding” him supposes seeking him; which does not arise from nature, but the grace of God, and follows upon the sight of the need and worth of Christ; and is done in the use of means, as reading, praying, and attendance on the word and ordinances: and finding him is no other than an enjoyment of him by faith; which is a seeing him, a taking hold on him, and possessing him; who is to be found in the covenant of grace, being the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it; in the Gospel, which is full of him; in the promises of it, which hold him forth, and the blessings of his grace; in the ordinances, which direct unto him, and where he shows himself: for he is not to be found by the light of nature, nor by carnal reason, nor by the law of Moses; but by means of the Gospel, attended with the Spirit of wisdom and

revelation in the knowledge of him; and a happy finding this, which fills the possessor with inexpressible joy! (see <sup><B04></sup>John 1:41);

*and the man [that] getteth understanding*; Christ, and a spiritual understanding of him: this is not a proper acquisition of a man's own; an interest in Christ is not gotten by anything of man's; not by his good works, which are the fruits of grace; nor by faith and repentance, which are gifts of grace themselves; but it is given unto a man: and "getting" here signifies, as before, possession and enjoyment of Christ, as God's pure gift; as a man that is said to obtain the favour of God, when he enjoys it, and the effects of it, in consequence of finding Christ, (<sup><B05></sup>Proverbs 8:35); where the same word is used as here. The word signifies to "draw out"<sup>f67</sup>; as metals are drawn out of the earth by searching and digging for, or as water out of a well; thus Christ, and the knowledge of him, are drawn out of the mines and fountains of the Scriptures, by such that seek after him aright. Aben Ezra interprets it, that draws or brings it out from another, and learns it; the true believer in Christ hears and learns of the Father, and so comes to Christ, and enjoys him, (<sup><B65></sup>John 6:45). The Targum is,

"who causes understanding to spring up;"

as water out of a well or fountain; out of his heart, as Gersom; or, as Jarchi, who has learned wisdom, that it is ready to break out, at his mouth; out of the abundance of it in his heart, his mouth speaketh; as such that know Christ cannot but speak to others of the things they have heard and seen, (<sup><B23></sup>Matthew 12:34,35 <sup><B00></sup>Acts 4:20).

**Ver. 14.** *For the merchandise of it [is] better than the merchandise of silver*, etc.] The believer is a spiritual merchant; faith is a trading with and for Christ, and for spiritual and heavenly things by him; and because there is a parting with something for Christ, as a man's sinful lusts and pleasures, his own righteousness, his friends and relations, when set in opposition to or competition with him, and even life itself, when called for; and because he runs a risk of suffering reproach, afflictions, and death itself; therefore this concern with him, and enjoyment of him, is called a "merchandise", which is "better than [that] of silver", or than silver which is got by merchandise: for Christ, and the things of Christ, are more valuable than silver, and to be preferred unto it; more useful and profitable than silver is, which a man may have a large abundance of, and lose his soul, whereas by Christ is the salvation of it; more satisfying than silver is, with which a man is never satisfied, whereas he that has Christ has enough, having all things;

more pleasant in obtaining, and more safe in enjoying; a great deal of anxiety and vexation attend the one, and inexpressible pleasure the other; and more durable and lasting than that, the enjoyment of Christ is for ever;

*and the gain thereof than fine gold*; the doctrines and ordinances of Christ are more to be desired than gold, yea, than fine gold; the blessings of grace by Christ, such as redemption, pardon of sin, etc. are not obtained by corruptible things, as silver and gold, but are more precious than they; and even the graces of Christ in the hearts of his people, as faith, hope, and love, are more precious than gold that perisheth; and much more preferable must he himself be, and the gain that accrues to a believer by him, which is cent per cent an hundred fold, even in this world, and in the world to come everlasting life: it is all clear gain a believer gets by Christ and trading with him; he has him, and all with him, without money and without price; he has that which is more worth than the gain of the whole world, even the salvation of his immortal soul; the riches he has by Christ are immense and unsearchable, the riches of grace and glory; it cannot be said how great this gain is.

**Ver. 15.** *She [is] more precious than rubies*, etc.] Or “pearls”<sup>f68</sup>, as some; which were formerly esteemed above all precious stones; the eastern were the more valuable<sup>f69</sup>, which Solomon had most knowledge of; Christ is the pearl of great price, of more value than any pearl, or all put together, (<sup>(4136)</sup>Matthew 13:46); (see Gill on “~~(43218)~~ Job 28:18”); or “carbuncles”<sup>f70</sup>, as others. The Targum and Septuagint render it in general terms “precious stones”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “than all riches”; there is a beautiful gradation in this and (<sup>(41814)</sup>Proverbs 3:14), wisdom is first preferred to silver, then to “fine gold”<sup>f71</sup>, and here, to “precious stones” Christ is precious, exceeding precious in his names and titles, Messiah, Jesus, Immanuel, etc. in his divine nature, and the perfections of it, which show his condescension and grace to become a Saviour, assure of his ability to save, and render his mediatorial performances valuable; in his person as God and man; in the beauty, fulness, and fitness of it; in his power, wisdom, grace, etc. in his offices, his priestly office; in his satisfaction, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, are precious; in his intercession, which is ever acceptable and prevalent; in his prophetic office, his Gospel is precious, every truth and promise of it; in his kingly office, all his ordinances and appointments, his commandments are more to be loved than gold, yea, than fine gold; in all his relations and characters, and in everything that belongs to him; he is so to them that believe, and to none else; (<sup>(41117)</sup>1 Peter 2:7);

these see the need and worth of him, receive much from him, and live upon him; and especially he is precious to them at first conversion; and so he is after desertions, and long absence; and under temptations and afflictions, losses and disappointments; and in the hour of death: and he is superlatively precious, “more precious than rubies”, or any precious stones; of a superior lustre and glory to them, being “the brightness of his Father’s glory”; and of more intrinsic worth and value, of greater price than any pearls, and more enriching to his possessors, for such possess all things;

*and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her*; this takes in a very great compass: there are many things that are very desirable, and the desires of man’s heart are very extensive, and not easily satisfied; there are the precious things of heaven, brought forth by the sun and moon; and the precious things of the earth, which are either upon it or in it, in the bowels of it, and upon the plains, and hills; but none of equal worth with Christ; there are many precious and excellent, and desirable persons in the world, neighbours, friends, relations, and acquaintance; saints on earth, and angels in heaven; yet none to be valued with Christ, and compared to him; (see <sup><4935></sup>Psalm 73:25).

**Ver. 16.** *Length of days [is] in her right hand*, etc.] Wisdom is here represented as a queen, as indeed she is above all kings and queens; (see <sup><4085></sup>Proverbs 8:15,16,18); holding in one hand, instead of a sceptre, “length of days”; and in the other, instead of a globe, riches and honour: the allusion is thought by some on this clause to be to an ancient custom of numbering things, and the ages of men, by the hand and fingers, beginning with the left hand, and when they came to a hundred went to the right<sup>f72</sup>; so that in that might be truly said to be “length of days”, few arriving to that number: or rather the reference is to what Solomon received of the Lord, who, asking wisdom, had not that only, but a long life, and riches and honour; see (<sup><4081></sup>1 Kings 3:11-14). Some think that only temporal blessings are here meant, and, because health and long life are preferable to wealth and honour, the former are said to be in the right hand, and the latter in the left; but seeing in the preceding verses the advantages of wisdom are superior to silver, gold, and precious stones, it can hardly be thought that she should be represented as only having temporal blessings in her hands to bestow on her followers. Others are of opinion that spiritual and eternal blessings are the right hand ones, being the principal; and temporal blessings are the left hand ones, as being the less valuable, (<sup><4063></sup>Matthew 6:33); but to me they seem all of one sort, all spiritual and eternal ones,

even those of the left hand, by comparing this passage with (<sup>2188</sup>Proverbs 8:18). By “length of days” is meant “length of days for ever and ever”, (<sup>2204</sup>Psalms 21:4); or eternal life, a life of vision or enjoyment of God; a life of perfect knowledge, holiness, and pleasure; being free from all the imperfections, difficulties, and distresses of the present one, and which will last for ever; this is in the hand of Christ, not the promise and grant of it only, but the thing itself, in consequence of his asking it of his Father: and which he has in a covenant way, and so has a right and power to bestow it: and it being in his hands shows both the valuableness and the security and safety of it; and also that it is to be had from him, and is in his gift, and in no other; and is a pure gift of his grace; wherefore happy is the man that finds Wisdom, or Christ, since he finds and has eternal life in him;

*[and] in her left hand riches and honour*; by “riches” are meant not temporal riches, for these are not always to the wise, nor to the children of Wisdom, nor of Christ; and all that have these are not happy, nor are they durable: but spiritual riches are intended, the riches of grace; of pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying grace, and of all supplies of grace; and also the riches of glory, which are solid and satisfying, immense and unsearchable, lasting and durable: and by “honour” is designed not the honour which comes from men, or the honour of this world; for such who find Christ, and are possessed of him, and profess him, have but a small share of this, being, generally speaking, accounted the faith and offscouring of the world; but yet they are the children of God, and so have that name which is better than to be the sons and daughters of the greatest monarch; they are the spouse of Christ, and so his queen that stands at his right hand in gold of Ophir; they are made kings and priests unto God, and shall reign with Christ for evermore; this honour have all the saints, and is what is in the hands of Christ to give, and does give, to all that believe in him: or “glory”<sup>173</sup>, as the word signifies; the glory of God, eternal glory; this as well as grace is Christ’s gift, (<sup>2841</sup>Psalms 84:11).

**Ver. 17.** *Her ways [are] ways of pleasantness*, etc.] The “ways” and methods which Christ took to bring about the salvation of his people; some in eternity, as engaging as a surety for them, entering into a covenant with his father on their account, taking the care and charge of their persons, grace, and glory; others in time, as the assumption of their nature, obedience to the law, suffering and dying in their room and stead, rising again, ascending to heaven, and interceding for them; calling them by his grace, clothing them with his righteousness, and keeping them by his

power unto salvation, and at last introducing them into his kingdom and glory. These are “pleasant”, to view the love of Christ in them, the success that attended them, the glory of God brought about hereby, and the salvation of his people; which is exceedingly pleasant, being agreeable to all the perfections of God; suitable to the case of sinners, full and complete in itself, free to them, and of an everlasting duration; it is this which makes Christ so pleasant to souls, and the Gospel also: or else the ways which Christ has prescribed and directed his followers to walk in are here meant; as himself, who is the principal way, and the only way to the Father, and to heaven and happiness; also the ways of faith, holiness, and truth, the ways of Christ’s commandments, and all the ordinances of the Gospel and institutions of religion; which are “pleasant”, when the presence of God and Christ is enjoyed in them; when the heart is enlarged with the love of God and Christ; when assisted therein by the Spirit of God, having good food and refreshment in them, and good company with them; and which, though attended with much tribulation, end in eternal pleasure;

*and all her paths [are] peace*; the “paths” which Christ has trod in to procure the peace of his people; he appeared in the council of peace, and assisted in it; he entered into a covenant of peace with his Father; he assumed the nature of his people, in order to be their peacemaker; he took the chastisement of their peace upon him; he obtained it by the blood of his cross; he sends his ministers to publish it, and his Spirit into the hearts of men to reconcile them to this way of peace and salvation by him; and the result of all this is, that an honourable “peace” is made for sinners, and peace of conscience is enjoyed, which passeth all understanding, flowing from the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and the whole issues in eternal peace in the world to come. Likewise all those “paths” which Christ instructs his people to walk in; as the paths of faith and obedience, these lead to the enjoyment of “peace” here and hereafter; there is much peace had in a way of believing, and great peace have they which love the law of God, and the commandments of Christ, and obey them; they may meet with much uneasiness at times in their own spirits, by reason of sin, temptation, and desertion; they may bring the malice of the world upon them, and have much trouble from it, and too, too often, disagree among themselves; and yet, after all, they have that peace which others have not while they live; and, when they die, they depart in peace, and enter into eternal peace. Now all this is true, not of unregenerate persons, who desire

not the knowledge of Christ, and to whom there is no peace, but of true believers in him.

**Ver. 18.** *She [is] a tree of life*, etc.] Or “lives”<sup>f74</sup>; so Christ is called, (<sup>(~~Rev~~)</sup> Revelation 2:7 22:2,14); in allusion to the tree of life in the garden of Eden, (<sup>(~~Gen~~)</sup> Genesis 2:9); he being the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; which souls may come at, and pluck and eat of the fruit which is upon him in great plenty and variety, even all the blessings of grace and glory;

*to them that lay hold upon her*; which is expressive of an act of faith on Christ, (<sup>(~~Heb~~)</sup> Hebrews 6:18); faith lays hold on the person of Christ as a Saviour, and will have him and no other; it comes to the blood of Christ, and deals with it for pardon and purification; it lays hold on his skirt, who is a Jew, on the robe of his righteousness, and puts it on; it lays hold on his strength, and goes forth in it, in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; it lays hold on his covenant, the blessings and promises of it, and takes them to itself: and this act supposes danger without him, safety in him, a view of suitable provisions for food and clothing with him; some strength of grace, and some degree of resolution; also condescension on Christ’s part to suffer himself to be handled by them; and likewise that he first took hold on them and brought them out of a state of nature to himself: great encouragement there is for sensible sinners to lay hold on Christ; he is set before them in the Gospel to be laid hold on; he never discourages any from so doing, nor casts out any that come to him; he is able to bear the stress of their salvation they lay upon him; multitudes of lost sinners have been saved by him: and he is a tree of life, as the text says, to such persons; they have spiritual life, and the support and comfort of it, from him now, and may expect everlasting life from him hereafter;

*and happy [is everyone] that retaineth her*; or “holds her fast”<sup>f75</sup>; (see <sup>(~~Sol~~)</sup> Song of Solomon 3:4 <sup>(~~Gen~~)</sup> Genesis 32:26); as such may be said to do who constantly apply to him for fresh communications of grace; who walk on in him as they have received him, and hold fast the profession of their faith in him. The phrase is expressive of great affection to him, and strong faith in him; faith keeps its hold of Christ through great darkness and many difficulties; oftentimes the soul walks in darkness, and yet stays itself on Christ, and, Abraham-like, believes in hope against hope. Faith is sometimes very low, and yet lets not go its hold; it fails not, through the prevalent intercession of Christ; it cannot so let go its hold as that there is a



parting; a partial departing there may be, but not a total one: however, it is sometimes very difficult for faith to keep fast hold of the Redeemer; it is for the honour and comfort of believers so to do; and it is their mercy that interest in Christ, and salvation by him, do not depend on acts of faith; for, though “we believe not, [yet] he abides faithful”, (<sup><B213></sup>2 Timothy 2:13); nevertheless happy are they that retain him, or are steadfast in their faith on him; they have much communion with him now, and shall live with him for evermore hereafter. Michaelis; so Mercerus.

**Ver. 19.** *The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth*, etc.] He has created all things, and made the world by his Son, the Wisdom of God, (<sup><B49></sup>Ephesians 3:9) (<sup><B300></sup>Hebrews 1:2); not using him as an instrument; but, he being an efficient cause with him, to him, as to the first cause, the creation of all things is ascribed, (<sup><B400></sup>John 1:1-3 <sup><B5016></sup>Colossians 1:16); and particularly the laying the foundation of the earth, (<sup><B300></sup>Hebrews 1:10); and though this is true of the divine perfection of wisdom, (<sup><B4002></sup>Jeremiah 10:12); yet from the context it appears best to understand it of the essential Wisdom of God, Christ Jesus; the Jerusalem Targum of (<sup><B4001></sup>Genesis 1:1); is, “by wisdom God created”, etc. and this serves greatly to set forth the dignity and excellency of Wisdom, or Christ, and so the happiness of that man that finds him; with this the account of him is closed and crowned;

*by understanding hath he established the heavens*: or prepared, adorned, and beautified them, by placing the luminaries in them, and directing their station, motion, and influence; the making of the heavens, with all the host of them, is ascribed to the essential Word or Wisdom of God, (<sup><B4316></sup>Psalms 33:6).

**Ver. 20.** *By his knowledge the depths are broken up*, etc.] From whence fountains and rivers flow, and whereby that great cavity was made which holds that large confluence of waters called the sea, (<sup><B4009></sup>Genesis 1:9,10). Some refer this to the breaking up the fountains of the great deep at the flood, (<sup><B4071></sup>Genesis 7:11); and others to the dividing of the waters of the Red sea when Israel came out of Egypt, (<sup><B4983></sup>Psalms 78:13); all wonderful works of divine wisdom, and show the greatness of him, in whom are “hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”, (<sup><B5028></sup>Colossians 2:3), by whom they were done;

*and the clouds drop down the dew*; which makes the earth fruitful, and is put for all the blessings of nature, (<sup><B4278></sup>Genesis 27:28); the drops of dew are begotten by the Lord, they have no other father but him; the vanities of the

Gentiles cannot produce them; he who fills the clouds with them, from whence they descend, is no other than the mighty God; and such is Christ the Wisdom of God. Some understand this in a mystical sense of Gospel ministers, and of the dew of Gospel doctrine, dropped and distilled by them under the influence and direction of Christ; see (<sup><631D></sup>Deuteronomy 32:2); but the literal sense is best.

**Ver. 21.** *My son, let not them depart from thine eyes*, etc.] Meaning not the things done by Wisdom; though it is good to contemplate his works of creation and providence, which serve to set forth the glory of Christ, and lead into adoring and admiring views of him, and to thankfulness to him; but wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, whereby these things are done, which are but so many names of Christ: we should always set him before us, keep him always in view, be ever looking to him by faith, and never suffer him to depart from our eyes; we should always have in sight his divine Person for our acceptance with God, the greatness and glory of it to encourage our faith and hope in him; we should keep in view his righteousness for our justification, and which we should ever make mention of at the throne of grace, and hold it forth in the hand of faith against all charges and accusations of law and justice, Satan, or our own hearts; we should be continually looking to his blood for peace and pardon, healing and cleansing; and our eyes should be at all times on his fulness, for fresh supplies of grace, for spiritual food, or the daily bread of our souls, and for spiritual strength and comfort; we should always consider him as the Saviour, and be exercising faith on him as such, for there is no other; and should always look upon him as the Mediator between God and man, and make use of him; and he should be ever before us as our example, both in the exercise of grace and performance of duty, to copy after; and we should always keep sight of him while running our Christian race, as the forerunner for us entered, and as the mark for the prize of the high calling of God. And not only Wisdom, or Christ, but all the things that are said of him in the context, we should never lose sight of; the exceeding great gain got by him, the superlative preciousness of him, the fulness of blessings in both his hands, the pleasantness and peaceableness of his ways, the usefulness of him as a tree of life to those that lay hold upon him and retain him, and the works of nature and providence done by him, (<sup><31B4></sup>Proverbs 3:14-20). Moreover, this may include all the truths and doctrines of Wisdom, or Christ; for, if the law and its precepts were to be upon the hands and as frontlets between the eyes of the Israelites, and so be ever in

sight, then much more the doctrines of the Gospel, (<sup><1818></sup>Deuteronomy 6:8,9). It is observable that the Septuagint here makes use of the same word the apostle does in (<sup><811></sup>Hebrews 2:1); speaking of Gospel truths; (see Gill on "<sup><811></sup>Hebrews 2:1"); these are meant in the next clause; and some by a transposition place them thus, "let not sound wisdom and discretion depart from thine eyes, keep" them; for by

*sound wisdom* is meant sound doctrine, the wholesome words of Christ, the solid and substantial truths of the Gospel. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "keep the law"; but the Syriac version, much better, "keep my doctrine", the doctrine of the Gospel; which also is meant by

*discretion*, or "counsel"<sup>176</sup>, as some render the word, and as the Gospel is called, (<sup><402></sup>Acts 20:27); this should be kept; the doctrines of it should be held fast and not let go, or be departed from; and the ordinances of it should be observed and kept, as they were delivered, from a principle of love, and a view to the glory of Christ; the advantages arising from them follow.

**Ver. 22.** *So shall they be life unto thy soul*, etc.] Give it a better life than it naturally has, though immortal; Christ is both the spiritual and eternal life of the souls of those that look unto him by faith; and his Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are the means of reviving drooping saints, and of quickening them to the discharge of their duty; wherefore both he and they should be kept in continual view, and held fast;

*and grace to thy neck*; an ornament to that and to the whole man; how ornamental is Christ and his righteousness to a believer! how lovely is the person that is steady in his principles, and regular in his practices! who stands fast in the truths of the Gospel, and whose conversation is as becomes it! (see <sup><300></sup>Proverbs 1:9 3:3).

**Ver. 23.** *Then shall thou walk in thy way safely*, etc.] In the way of thy duty and business, without fear of any enemy; having in sight the Captain of salvation gone before, and walking in such ways of pleasantness and peace as Wisdom's are; and having such a lamp to the feet, and such a light unto the paths, as the Gospel and its doctrines be;

*and thy foot shall not stumble*; at the word and the truths of it, as some men do, being thereunto appointed; and at Christ, the stumbling stone laid in Zion, particularly at his justifying righteousness; see (<sup><1018></sup>1 Peter 2:8 <sup><803></sup>Romans 9:33).

**Ver. 24.** *When thou liest down thou shalt not be afraid*, etc.] That is, when thou liest down on thy bed at night in order to take sleep, having committed thyself into the hands of a faithful Creator and covenant God and Father, and of Christ the Redeemer and Wisdom of God; thou shalt not be afraid of thieves breaking in to hurt thy person or rob thee of thy property, or of fire to consume thy dwelling and substance, and of nocturnal apparitions and diabolical spectres deceiving thy sight and disturbing thy mind: or when thou art “asleep”<sup>f77</sup>, for so the word also signifies; thou shalt not be surprised out of it with any of the above things, or terrified in it with uneasy imaginations, anxious cares, and distressing dreams;

*yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet*; free of all uneasy thoughts and cares, sound and refreshing, pleasant and comfortable, like that of the labouring man, (<sup><2062></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:12); (see <sup><5908></sup>Psalm 4:8). This epithet of “sweet” is often given to “sleep” in poetic writings<sup>f78</sup>.

**Ver. 25.** *Be not afraid of sudden fear*, etc.] Of anything terrible that comes unawares, unthought of, by any of the above things mentioned in the preceding note; or by any rumours and reports of danger being near at hand; always think thyself safe in the arms of Wisdom, and under the care of Israel’s keeper, who neither slumbers nor sleeps;

*neither of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh*; either of the desolation which wicked men threaten to bring, and are suffered to bring, upon the godly for the sake of religion; either on their persons or goods, since suffering at their hands in such a cause is to the honour of saints, and for the glory of God; or of the desolation which comes upon the godly, for God is able to deliver him from it, as Noah and his family from the universal deluge, and Lot and his family from Sodom and Gomorrah; or if they promiscuously fall in it, nevertheless it will be well with them to all eternity.

**Ver. 26.** *For the Lord shall be thy confidence*, etc.] The object of it, in whom thou shall put thy confidence, and be safe and secure from all fear and danger: or “the Lord shall be in thy confidence”<sup>f79</sup>; shall support thee in it, and maintain that, so that thou shalt not cast it away; the word used has sometimes the notion off oily in it, and Jarchi, from the Jerusalem Talmud, produces a sense agreeable to it;

“the Lord shall be in things in which thou art foolish;”

which, how absurd it may seem to be, will admit of a good interpretation; that the Lord will be with Wisdom's followers in things which may seem foolishness to the world; as Christ, the things of Christ, and the things of the Spirit of Christ, the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are. The Targum is,

“the Lord shall be thine help,”

in all times of distress, difficulty, and danger;

*and shall keep thy foot from being taken*; in the snares of sin, temptation, and mischief; in those which Satan and the world lay for God's people; from these the Lord preserves them; wherefore happy are those that have an interest in Christ, who find and enjoy him.

**Ver. 27.** *Withhold not good from them to whom it is due*, etc.] Honour, reverence, and tribute, to civil magistrates, (~~<406>~~Romans 13:7,8); just payment of debts to creditors, and alms to the poor, which, by what follows, seems to be chiefly intended; and the Septuagint render it,

“do not abstain to do well to the needy;”

and Aben Ezra interprets it of the poor; to them alms are due because of their wants, and by the appointment; of God; hence called “righteousness”, in some copies of (~~<406>~~Matthew 6:1); so money kept from the poor “mammon of unrighteousness”, (~~<269>~~Luke 16:9). They are, as the word in the Hebrew text signifies, “the owners thereof”<sup>f80</sup>: rich men are not so much proprietors of good things as they are God's alms givers or stewards to distribute to the poor; and, as often as men have opportunity, they should do good in this way to all, especially to the household of faith, (~~<860>~~Galatians 6:10); this will hold true, as of temporal good things, so of spiritual; as good advice, exhortation, and doctrine. The Vulgate Latin version is, “do not forbid him to do well that can”; which sense is favoured by Jarchi: and as we should not abstain from doing good ourselves, so neither should we forbid, hinder, or discourage others; but the former sense is best;

*when it is in the power of thine hand to do [it]*; not to hinder others, as Jarchi, but to do good; when a man has a sufficiency in his hands to do good with; has not only enough for himself and his family, but something to spare; when he has both opportunity and ability; and when he can do it at once and without delay, as follows.

**Ver. 28.** *Say not unto thy neighbour*, etc.] Either to whom thou art indebted, and who comes for the payment of a just debt; or to any poor and indigent person that applies for alms:

*go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give*; go home, and come tomorrow, and I will pay thee what I owe thee; or do not trouble me now, come another time, and perhaps I may relieve thy wants: this should not be said, because a man cannot be sure of tomorrow that he shall ever see it; nor may it be in the power of his hands, should he live unto the morrow, to do as he promises; his substance may be taken from him; and besides, in the mean time, the poor object may perish for want of relief;

*when thou hast it by thee*; money to pay thy debts with, or to give alms to the poor; and therefore should give readily and at once, and not make any excuses and delays; “bis dat, qui cito dat”. Some make this to be part of the covetous man’s words, saying, “and there is with thee”; or thou hast enough, thou hast no need to ask of me; thou hast what thou askest; thou art not in want; thou art richer than I; but the other sense is best. The Septuagint and Arabic versions add,

“for thou knowest not what the day following may bring forth;”

or may happen on it.

**Ver. 29.** *Devise not evil against thy neighbour*, etc.] Or, “plough not evil”<sup>81</sup>; turn not up thy heart to find evil against thy neighbour, as the earth is turned up by the plough; (see <sup>38013</sup>Hosea 10:13). Do not contrive and form schemes in thy mind and thoughts to do him any injury, in his name and character, in his person, property, or family: a good man should devise all the good he can to his fellow creatures, but not evil to any; especially to his neighbour, and as described in the next clause;

*seeing he dwelleth securely by thee*; having a good opinion of thee, and not suspecting any ill design against him, thinks himself, goods, and family, in safety; and is under no concern to provide for his security, placing his confidence in thee, and perhaps to such a degree as to entrust with his secrets. Now to project evil against such a man is exceeding base; it is doubly sinful; this is an aggravation of the iniquity.

**Ver. 30.** *Strive not with a man without cause*, Either by words, in a wrangling, quarrelsome, and contentious way, for mere trifles; when there is no foundation for it, no just reason given to form a complaint, or pick a

quarrel upon; or by deeds, by lawsuits, when there is nothing to proceed upon; or it is so trifling, that it is not worth while to litigate it or contend about: such, who strive either way, are far from following the example of Wisdom or Christ, and from taking his advice, (<sup><4129></sup>Matthew 12:19 5:40);

*if he have done thee no harm*; no real hurt to thy person, nor injury to thy substance; if he has not abused nor defrauded thee, nor taken any thing from thee by force or fraud, nor withheld from thee what is thy right and due. But otherwise the laws of God and man ought to take place; right may be sought for, and justice should be done.

**Ver. 31.** *Envy thou not the oppressor*, etc.] The man that gets wealth and riches by acts of injustice, by oppressing the poor, by rapine and violence; do not envy his prosperity, and the substance he is possessed of; do not wish to be in his place and circumstances, to enjoy his affluence and ease; do not look upon his happiness with an envious eye and a fretting heart; he is far from being a happy man; his end will be bad; (see <sup><4370></sup>Psalm 37:1,7);

*and choose none of his ways*; which he has used to get his riches in; do not follow him in them; for should you do as he has done, and get ever so much, since this would be with the loss of your souls, of what advantage would it be? He makes the best choice that chooses the “good part” that shall not be taken away, (<sup><2102></sup>Luke 10:42); Christ, and the ways of Christ.

**Ver. 32.** *For the froward [is] abomination to the Lord*, etc.] The perverse man, that pleases not God, and is contrary to all men, as the Jews were; one froward in his words and actions: “who transgresses the law”, as the Arabic version renders it; one that acts contrary to the nature, will, and word of God; and such an one is not only abominable in his sight, but an “abomination” itself; it is sin, which is that abominable thing that God hates, that makes him so: and the Targum is,

“for iniquity is abominable before the Lord;”

*but his secret [is] with the righteous*: not such who are outwardly so to others, or trust in themselves that they are righteous, or seek for righteousness by their own works; but such who are justified by the righteousness of Christ, which faith receives from him, and in consequence of which a man lives soberly and righteously: with these the “secret” of the Lord is; of his love, grace, and favour, which was from everlasting, and is manifested in regeneration; of his purposes of grace, with respect to election, redemption, calling, and adoption, which is made known in

effectual calling; of his covenant, as that he is their covenant God, Christ is their covenant head and Mediator, and that they have an interest in all the grace, blessings, and promises of it; of the Gospel, and the several mysteries of it, which are so to carnal men; of his providences, what he is doing, or what he is about to do, and will do hereafter, (<sup><3887></sup>Amos 3:7); and of communion and fellowship with him. The phrase denotes friendship and familiarity; God deals with the righteous as a man does with his intimate friend, converses freely with him, and discloses his secrets to him: and the word is rendered “confabulation” by the Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate Latin versions; see (<sup><3804></sup>Job 29:4,5 <sup><1254></sup>Psalms 25:14).

**Ver. 33.** *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked*, etc.] The wicked man, being a transgressor of the law, is under the curse of it; and all that he has, his house, his substance, his very blessings are curses; (see <sup><3912></sup>Malachi 2:2 <sup><3882></sup>Zechariah 5:2-4); he is accursed amidst his greatest affluence, and sometimes from a plentiful estate is reduced to penury and want: and Aben Ezra interprets it, “the curse of want”; and the Vulgate Latin version is, “want from the Lord is”, etc.

*but he blesseth the habitation of the just*; the righteous man, as before described; he is blessed himself, having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and his sins forgiven him for his sake; and what he has of worldly substance, though it be ever so little, he has it with a blessing; and therefore it is better than the riches of many wicked men; his house, though it is but a cottage, as the word <sup>f82</sup> here signifies, is blessed with the presence of God in it; his family, his children, and servants, are blessed, having his instructions and example, and especially when made effectual by the grace of God; as the house of Obededom was blessed for the sake of the ark, so is a just man’s house, being a “bethel”, an house of God, blessed on account of his worship in it; (see <sup><1061></sup>2 Samuel 6:11).

**Ver. 34.** *Surely he scorneth the scorners*, etc.] That make a mock at sin, a jest of religion, that scoff at the doctrines of the Gospel and the professors of it; these the Lord looks upon, laughs at, and has them in derision. The Greek version and two apostles render it, “he resisteth the proud”, (<sup><1085></sup>1 Peter 5:5 <sup><5046></sup>James 4:6). Such who are haughty and arrogant, that exalt themselves and despise others; as those of a pharisaical spirit are and do, are abhorred and despised by the Lord; he sets himself against them, is their enemy, “and scatters [them] in the imagination of their hearts”, (<sup><1051></sup>Luke 1:51). L’Empereur observes <sup>f83</sup> that this version is quite agreeable



to the Hebrew text and the sense of Jewish writers: R. Alshech says, that **מַצְלִי**, rendered “scorners”, are such who will not look upon the divine Being, but go on boldly in sin, as if there was no God; and Kimchi explains the word by **מַצְאִי**, who exalt themselves, or are proud; and because proud men yield to none, but resist others, hence the verb is used, by the Septuagint, to resist; agreeably to which the Targum is,

“he shall drive away;”

and Alshech,

“he shall destroy;”

and Gersom,

“God shall make others mock them;”

which is, to resist them;

*but he giveth grace unto the lowly*; or humble souls; such who are made truly sensible of sin, and lie low in their own sight on account of it; who, sensible of the imperfection and insufficiency of their own righteousness, submit to the righteousness of Christ; ascribe their salvation, and all the blessings of it, to the free grace of God; own the deficiency of their duties, and disclaim all merit in them; think the worst of themselves, and the best of others; and humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and are patient under every adverse dispensation of Providence; knowing what their deserts are, how undeserving of any favour, and how deserving of the divine displeasure. Now God first gives grace to these persons to make them thus humble and lowly which they are not naturally, and then he gives them more grace, according to his promise; and it is in proof of God’s giving more grace to such persons that the Apostle James produces this passage, (<sup>2046</sup>Proverbs 4:6). Grace is God’s gift, first and last, what is had in first conversion, in after supplies, and for perseverance to the end: sanctifying, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace, are the pure gifts of God, of his own favour and good will, without any merit, motive, or condition in the creature; and which he gives liberally and bountifully; for not favour with men is here meant, as some think, but the grace of God.

**Ver. 35.** *The wise shall inherit glory*, etc.] The wise are the same with the just and lowly before mentioned, to whom God gives grace, and to these he gives glory. The “wise” are such who are so, not in a natural, civil, or

notional sense, or that are wise in the things of nature, in civil affairs and in speculative matters of religion; but in a spiritual sense, who are wise unto salvation; who know themselves, the sinfulness of their nature, their inability to do that which is good, and their want of righteousness to justify them before God; who are sensible of the sickness and diseases of their souls, their spiritual poverty, and their great folly and ignorance with respect to things of a spiritual nature; who know Christ, and him crucified, the way of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him; that know him, not only notionally, but so as to apply unto him, and rest on him for salvation; who build it on him the foundation, on him only, and give him all the glory of it; and who have also a competent knowledge of the Gospel, and a comfortable experience of the truths of it; and who take up a profession of religion upon such an experience, and hold it fast without depending on it, and have a conversation becoming it, walking circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Now these shall “inherit glory”; not the glory of this world, or honour among men in it; but the glory of another, of which the glory of this world, and of, he most excellent things in it, is but a faint resemblance: it is unseen, inconceivable, and incomparable; it is an eternal glory which Christ is entered into, and the same the Father has given him; and will lie in the vision of God, and communion with him; in beholding the glory of Christ, and in having a glory put upon them both in soul and body: and this they shall enjoy as an inheritance; not by purchase or acquisition, but by free gift; as a bequest of their Father; which comes to them as children, through the death of Christ the testator, and will be possessed for ever, as inheritances run;

*but shame shall be the promotion of fools*; not fools in a natural, but in a religious sense; such who know not themselves, nor the way of salvation; who mock at sin, and scoff at religion: these and everyone of these “shall take” or “lift up shame”<sup>f84</sup>, as their part and portion, alluding to the heave offering under the law, in opposition to the glory the wise shall inherit and possess. Or, “shame shall lift up fools”<sup>f85</sup>; hold them forth, and make them manifest and conspicuous: all the promotion they shall be raised unto will be only shame and confusion, if not in this world, yet in that to come; for, when they shall rise from the dead, it will be “to shame and everlasting contempt”, (<sup>711D</sup>Daniel 12:2). The Targum is,

“fools shall receive tribulation;”

that shall be their inheritance in the other world.