

# CHAPTER 8

## INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 8

This chapter contains the instructions of Wisdom or Christ; showing the excellency of them, and the author of them, in opposition to the harlot and her allurements, in the preceding chapter. Christ, under the name of Wisdom, is represented as an herald, publishing the Gospel in the ministry of the word, either in person or by his servants, (<sup>2180L</sup>Proverbs 8:1). The places where this proclamation is made are described, (<sup>2182P</sup>Proverbs 8:2,3); the persons to whom, (<sup>2184P</sup>Proverbs 8:4,5). The excellency of the things delivered, being right things; truth, agreeably to the word of God, plain and easy to be understood, and of more worth than gold, silver, and precious stones, (<sup>2186P</sup>Proverbs 8:6-11). And then Wisdom, or Christ, is commended and recommended by his consummate prudence and knowledge, by his hatred of evil, and by his influence on the political affairs of kings and princes, (<sup>2182P</sup>Proverbs 8:12-16); and the advantages of those that are early seekers of him are pointed out; their enjoyment of his favour, of his riches, honour and righteousness; and their being led by him in right paths now, and inheriting eternal glory hereafter, (<sup>2187P</sup>Proverbs 8:17-21). And next follows an account of his existence from eternity as a divine Person, illustrated by a variety of phrases, (<sup>2182P</sup>Proverbs 8:22-29); and of his being with the Father; of his great affection for him, and complacency in him; and of Christ's wonderful delight and pleasure in the sons of men, (<sup>2183P</sup>Proverbs 8:30,31). And the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to them to hearken to his instructions; setting forth the happiness of those that wait on him in public ordinances, and find him; and the misery of those that hate and reject him.

**Ver. 1.** *Doth not wisdom cry?* etc.] Christ, who is the Wisdom of God; (see Gill on "<sup>2183P</sup>Proverbs 1:20"); and which clearly appears from his subsistence with the Father, his eternal existence, and from many personal properties, characters, and actions ascribed to him throughout the whole of this chapter, and in the following. "Crying" is here attributed to him, which signifies proclaiming, publishing, preaching the everlasting Gospel, which directs men in the right way of enjoying peace, comfort, honour, and

eternal happiness; the allusion is to an herald that this up his voice aloud at noon day in the public streets when he proclaims; and is opposed to the whispers of a harlot, at night, in a corner; truth seeks no corner, its voice is heard at noon day, it will bear the light. Now, “does not” or “shall not Wisdom cry”, or Christ preach; verily he does or will, in his word, by his prophets under the former dispensation; in his own person, and by his apostles and ministers, under the present; who then would hearken to the alluring voice of a harlot, or hear Jezebel the wicked prophetess teach, when Christ himself preaches, or however by his faithful ministers?

*and understanding put forth her voice?* the same with Wisdom, or Christ, (see <sup><4084></sup>Proverbs 8:14); by whose voice the Gospel is meant, which is the voice of Christ, which is heard and followed by the sheep of Christ, and not the voice of a stranger; and “putting it forth”, giving or uttering it, signifies the publication of it.

**Ver. 2.** *She standeth in the top of high places*, etc.] To be both seen and heard, for which reason Christ went up into a mountain and preached, (<sup><4085></sup>Matthew 5:1);

*by the way*; the roadside, to instruct and direct passengers as they go along, to show them the right way, and caution them against taking wrong ways; so did Christ, (<sup><4086></sup>Matthew 16:6 22:16);

*in the places of the paths*; or, “between the paths”<sup><210></sup>; where more ways than one met together, and so difficult to know which was the right path to take; here Christ stands in the ministry of the word to direct, and says, “this is the way, walk ye in it”, (<sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 30:21); and as there are many ways which are proposed to men to walk in, some of open profaneness and impiety, and others that have a show of religion and devotion, but both lead men wrong; the ministers of Christ show, and he by them, the way of salvation, and how to avoid such as lead to destruction, (<sup><4087></sup>Acts 16:17).

**Ver. 3.** *She crieth at the gates*, etc.] Of the temple, or of the city, where the courts of judicature were, and persons met on civil accounts; and where people were continually passing and repassing;

*at the entry of the city*; meeting those that came out of the country to the city upon trade and business;

*at the coming in at the doors*; of the temple, or city, or private houses; all these expressions denote the publicness of the Gospel ministry, both by

Christ himself, who spake openly to the world, always taught in the synagogues and temple, and in secret said nothing; and who ordered his disciples to preach what they heard and received from him upon the house tops, (~~3181~~John 18:20 ~~4007~~Matthew 10:27); so did the Apostle Paul, (~~4400~~Acts 20:20,27).

**Ver. 4.** *Unto you, O men, I call*, etc.] Not angels, the fallen angels; for, as they had nothing to do with Christ, he had nothing to do with them, or say unto them, (~~4089~~Matthew 8:29); nor the brutes, irrational creatures; for, though the Gospel is to be preached to every creature, yet only to rational ones, (~~4165~~Mark 16:15), “men”, whom God has loved and Christ has redeemed; these are by the Gospel called, and called effectually. There are some men indeed who are only externally called; but there are others who are also called with an holy calling, of which (see Gill on “~~4004~~Proverbs 1:24”). Some think men of eminence are here meant, as rich men, so Aben Ezra; or men of wisdom and knowledge, such as the Scribes and Pharisees, and learned doctors among the Jews; but it rather seems to design men indefinitely, of whatsoever rank or order, state or condition;

*and my voice [is] to the sons of men*; which some interpret of the poor, as Aben Ezra; or those who are more illiterate, or the common people; so that high and low, rich and poor, have the Gospel preached unto them; but the phrase seems to intend the same as before, the same thing is said in different words.

**Ver. 5.** *O ye simple, understand wisdom*, etc.] The Gospel, the wisdom of God in a mystery, particularly the doctrine of salvation by Christ; it is the highest wisdom to know Christ and him crucified: and they are “the simple” who are weak and easy to be imposed upon, who are here called unto; and generally speaking such are they to whom the mysteries of grace are made known, while they are hid from the wise and prudent;

*and ye fools, be of an understanding heart*; or “cause the heart to understand”; or “get an understanding heart”<sup>f211</sup>; make use of all means to get spiritual wisdom and understanding; all men, let them be what they will in other respects, are fools as to a spiritual and experimental knowledge of divine things; and that man can only be said to have truly an understanding heart that knows his own folly, the plague of his heart, his need of Christ, the worth of him; and has an understanding given him to know him and his interest in him.

**Ver. 6.** *Hear; for I will speak of excellent things*, etc.] Such are the things of the Gospel; they not only excel what the light of nature dictates and directs to, but even what the law of Moses commands and requires; the doctrines of the Gospel are excellent in their author, nature, and use; particularly those which respect the love, grace, and mercy of God, the person and offices of Christ, the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and the great salvation which he has wrought out. These are the doctrines of grace which proceed out of Wisdom's mouth, and are such as never man spake the like; they are to be approved of, being what differ from others, and to be preferred unto them, (~~5000~~Philippians 1:9); or "princely things";<sup>f212</sup>, as the word may be rendered; which became him who is the Prince of the kings of the earth, and the Prince of peace to speak; and are worthy to be received by princes, though little known and valued by the princes of this world; and are embraced and, esteemed by those who are the princes of the Lord's people: or they are "principal" ones, or "leading" truths<sup>f213</sup>; of the greatest importance, interesting ones; "praiseworthy", as Aben Ezra, or "honourable", as Gersom, and to be had in the highest esteem and veneration;

*and the opening of my lips [shall be] right things*: agreeable to right reason, though above it; consonant to the righteous law of God, and even to the perfection of God's righteousness, which is greatly glorified by the obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ, and redemption through him; and these are the excellent and principal doctrines of the Gospel, even justification by Christ's righteousness, atonement by his sacrifice, and redemption through his blood; all which are consistent with and greatly display the justice of God: nor are any of the doctrines of the Gospel licentious ones, but on the contrary teach men to live soberly and righteously; as well as they are plain and easy to such who are conversant with them, as is often expressed, and may be the sense of the word here used also.

**Ver. 7.** *For my mouth shall speak truth*, etc.] And nothing but the truth; and nothing more or less can be spoken by Wisdom, or Christ, who is truth itself; nothing else can come out of his mouth, or drop from his lips; all the doctrines of Christ are agreeable to the Scriptures of truth, and are what the Spirit of truth leads into; and the whole is called "the word of truth": there are many very particular and special truths, but the principal one is salvation by Jesus Christ;

*and wickedness [is] an abomination to my lips*; the sin of lying more especially, as opposed to truth; this is detestable to wisdom, what Christ never suffered his lips to utter; for no lie is of the truth, but of Satan the father of lies; and, as it is abhorred by Christ, it ought to be by all good men.

**Ver. 8.** *All the words of my mouth [are] in righteousness*, etc.] Or “with righteousness”<sup>f214</sup>; are connected with it, are agreeable to it; are righteous ones, consistent with righteousness, with the righteous nature, will, and law of God: or “are concerning righteousness”<sup>f215</sup> the necessity of righteousness in order to eternal life; the insufficiency of man’s own righteousness to entitle to it; the need, worth, and excellency of the righteousness of Christ for that purpose; and of the propriety and usefulness of a life of righteousness and holiness, which the grace of God instructs men in;

*[there is] nothing froward or perverse in them*; that is contrary to right reason, or to the law of God, or to the Scriptures of truth, or to the analogy of faith; nor is there any contradiction in the doctrines of the Gospel one to another, but an entire harmony and uniformity in them; they are not “yea” and “nay”.

**Ver. 9.** *They [are] all plain to him that understandeth*, etc.] Whose understanding is enlightened by the Spirit of God; who is a spiritual man, that has a discerning, and can judge of spiritual things: as for the carnal man, let him have what natural knowledge or wisdom he will, he cannot know these things; for they are spiritually discerned, and can only be discerned by spiritual men. The Bible is a sealed book to others, learned or unlearned; the mysteries or doctrines of the Gospel are hid in parables from such; but those to whom Christ has given an understanding to know him, these know them, and they are plain unto them: for though there are some things hard to be understood in the Scriptures, as in Paul’s epistles, and some sublime truths in the Gospel; yet those which are necessary to salvation are easily understood; that faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners, is a very plain one;

*and right to them that find knowledge*; a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ and his truths. The Targum is,

“to them who desire knowledge;”

and so the Syriac version; that seek for it heartily and diligently, in a right way, in the use of proper means, under the direction and by the assistance of the Spirit of God.

**Ver. 10.** *Receive my instruction, and not silver*, etc.] Not but that silver may be desired, sought after and received, consistent with the instructions of wisdom; though an anxious, immoderate, sinful pursuit after it, hinders the reception of them; and when they are in competition, the one is to be preferred to the other: the doctrines of the Gospel are of more worth, and more to be desired, than thousands of gold and silver; and therefore the meaning is, that the instruction of wisdom should be received rather than silver; it should have the preference; so Gersom interprets it, and with which agrees the following clause:

*and knowledge rather than choice gold*; that is, the knowledge of Christ, and the knowledge of God in Christ; the knowledge of the Gospel, and the truths of it; a spiritual and experimental knowledge of these things is of more value than the finest gold, than the gold of Ophir; (see <sup><1910></sup>Psalm 19:10 119:72).

**Ver. 11.** *For wisdom [is] better than rubies*, etc.] A sort of precious stones: or, “than precious stones”<sup>f216</sup> in general; so the Targum and Septuagint, Arabic and Syriac versions; even than all of them, as the Vulgate Latin version; or, than “pearls”<sup>f217</sup>, or “carbuncles”<sup>f218</sup>: there are none equal to it, nor is it to be procured by them; see (<sup><1836></sup>Job 28:16-19);

*and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it*; (see Gill on “<sup><1085></sup>Proverbs 3:15”).

**Ver. 12.** *I Wisdom dwell with Prudence*, etc.] Here Wisdom begins to speak in her own person, and continues to do so unto the end of the chapter; or Christ describes himself, pencils out and draws his own picture, and a most lovely one it is. In this clause Christ is described by the habitation in which he dwells, “I Wisdom inhabit Prudence”<sup>f219</sup>; so the words may be rendered; that is the house in which I dwell: or by his companion with whom he dwells, “with Prudence”; that is my companion with whom I am familiarly conversant. The phrase, taken both ways, shows that Christ is very largely, yea, fully possessed of prudence; as a man that dwells in a house is the proprietor and possessor of it, so prudence is Christ’s; it belongs to him, he enjoys it; he dwells in prudence, and prudence dwells in him; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in

him, and the Spirit of wisdom rests upon him: and also it shows that prudence is natural to him, and not adventitious; it does not come from abroad, nor does he go abroad for it; he and Prudence are as it were born and brought up together in one and the same house: and likewise that there is an intimacy and familiarity between them; Prudence is most present with Christ, is always near him, and ready at hand to be exercised by him; as it was when he was incarnate on earth; he “dealt prudently”, as it was prophesied he should, (<sup>27013</sup>Isaiah 52:13); which appeared in his disputation with the doctors in the temple at twelve years of age; by his prudent answers to the ensnaring questions of his enemies; and throughout the whole of his ministry, both as to the manner and matter of it and particularly at the time of his seizure, arraignment, trial, and crucifixion. Or by “prudence” may be meant prudent men, such as are possessed of this quality or virtue, and with such Wisdom, or Christ, dwells; not with the wise and prudent of this world; nor with such who are so in their own conceit; but with such who are sensible of their folly; who are humbled under a sense of sin, and are made wise unto salvation; who believe in Christ, which is a point of the highest prudence; and who walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; such as these have the presence and company of Christ;

*and find out knowledge of witty inventions*; the word **twmzm** is sometimes used in an ill sense, and is rendered “wicked devices”, (<sup>3112P</sup>Proverbs 12:2 <sup>4371P</sup>Psalms 37:7); and may be taken in this sense here. Christ, who is God omniscient, knows all that is in the hearts of men; all their thoughts, schemes, and devices; he found out, he scented the knowledge of them when here on earth; he was privy to the secret thoughts and wickedness of men’s hearts; he knew all the hypocritical designs and views of the Pharisees, when they tempted him with ensnaring questions; he was apprised of all the ways and methods they devised to take away his life before the time, and so escaped them; he found out the knowledge of Judas’s wicked scheme to betray him, and spoke of it to him and others before it was executed; and he knew all the wicked devices and stratagems of Satan against himself, in tempting him in the wilderness, and in putting it into the heart of Judas to betray him; and he knows all his wiles and artful schemes to decoy his people, and makes them known unto them, so that they are not ignorant of his devices. Moreover, it may be understood and interpreted in a good sense, of the thoughts, devices, and purposes of God’s heart, as in (<sup>34231P</sup>Jeremiah 23:20 51:11); and particularly as relating to

man's redemption and salvation: this is a device or "invention" of God; sin is man's invention, by which he fell; but the recovery of man is the invention of God; he found out the persons to be saved in his eternal decrees; and the person that should be the Saviour of them in his council and covenant, and appointed him for the work; and he found out the way and manner of saving men by him, even by the ransom and sacrifice of himself: and this is a "witty" invention, wherein God has abounded in all wisdom and prudence; as appears by settled upon so proper a person to be the Saviour as his own Son; by bringing it about in a way so agreeable to all his perfections, to the satisfaction of his justice, and the honour of his law; and in making such partakers of it, and in such a way, as most glorifies the riches of his grace. And this scheme Christ has full knowledge of, being in the bosom of his Father, as one brought up with him; and was the Angel of the great council, and present when the design was formed; and besides he has found it to his cost, even at the expense of his precious blood; and so has "obtained", or "found redemption" for us, as the phrase is in (~~3912~~ Hebrews 9:12), and having found it, and the knowledge of it, he makes it known to others by his Spirit, word, and ministers. Likewise these "witty inventions" may be interpreted of the whole Gospel, and the doctrines of it; the Gospel is an "invention", not of men, but of God; not a scheme and device of men, but of God; it is not taught by men, and learned of them, or of them only, but of God; and a "witty" one it is, it is the wisdom of God, the manifold wisdom of God, though esteemed foolishness by men. This Christ has "found out the knowledge of"; he has full and perfect knowledge of it, it is hid in him; it came and was preached by him, as it never was before or since; and he communicated, and still does communicate the knowledge of it; and blessed are they that know the joyful sound!

**Ver. 13.** *The fear of the Lord [is] to hate evil*, etc.] All evil in general, evil thoughts, evil words, evil actions, evil company, evil worship, and evil doctrines; and by "the fear of the Lord", which shows itself in an hatred of evil, because of the loathsome nature of it, and being contrary to God and his will, and as it appears in the glass of the law, and especially in the glass of pardoning love, is meant not the fear of his judgments and wrath, or a distrust of his grace and goodness, much less an hypocritical fear, or a mere show of devotion; but a reverential affection for him, which is peculiar to children; a filial, godly fear, which is consistent with strong faith, great joy, and true courage; and is opposite to pride and self-



confidence, and is accompanied with real holiness; it takes its rise from the grace of God, and is greatly increased and promoted by the discoveries of his love and goodness: this is brought into the account and description of wisdom, to distinguish it from carnal wisdom; to commend wisdom from its holiness; for this the beginning of wisdom, yea, wisdom itself, (~~833~~ Job 28:28 ~~8310~~ Psalm 111:10 ~~1000~~ Proverbs 1:7 9:10);

*pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate;* these are the particulars of evil, which Wisdom, or Christ, declares his hatred of. “Pride”, which appears in men in thinking too highly of themselves, in speaking too well of themselves, in despising others, in setting up and trusting to their own righteousness for salvation, and in crying up the purity and power of human nature; this is very contrary to the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus, and must be hateful to him: “arrogancy” differs little from pride, and the two words in the Hebrew are very much the same, very little differ; it is an ascribing that to a man’s self which does not belong to him, whether in things natural, civil, or spiritual; when men attribute their justification and salvation to their own works, it is arrogancy, and must be hateful to Christ; who been at so much pains and expense to bring in everlasting righteousness, and work out salvation for men: it is the height of arrogancy in a man to conceit he a power to regenerate, renew, and convert himself, and, with the haughty Arminian, Grevinchovius, to say, he has made himself to differ from others; this must be hateful to Christ, by whose Spirit and grace this only is done: and it is a piece of arrogancy when men ascribe all the good works done by them to their own power, when without Christ they can do nothing; which therefore must be displeasing to him. “The evil way”, as Aben Ezra observes, is an evil custom and course of sinning; a man’s own way, which he chooses and delights in, and which leads to destruction: “and the froward mouth” is the mouth that speaks perverse things; things contrary to a man’s own heart, contrary to truth, to the rule of the divine word, to the Gospel, to Christ and his people, and to all men; which must be hateful and abominable to him who is truth itself.

**Ver. 14.** *Counsel [is] mine, and sound wisdom,* etc.] The words and sentiments in this and the following clause are the same with those in (~~8123~~ Job 12:13); and scent to be taken from thence, which are spoken of God; and being here applied to Wisdom, show that a divine Person is meant; and are very applicable to him who the Wisdom of God, and the power of God; and on whom rests the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,

of counsel, and of might, and of the fear of the Lord, (~~102~~1 Corinthians 1:24 ~~210~~Isaiah 11:2). “Counsel” belongs to him, and is used and exercised by him, as concerned with the Father and Spirit, both in the words of nature and grace; to whom all the purposes and counsels of God are known; and who was consulted in the creation of man, and in his redemption, reconciliation, and salvation; the council of peace being between them both: and it belongs to him, and is used by him with respect to his people; he is council to them; he gives them counsel and advice, he being the wonderful Counsellor; he gave it in person when here on earth, both to sinners and to saints, and which continues on record: the Gospel is the counsel of Christ, and it is very suitable and seasonable, hearty, sincere, and faithful; is freely given, and, being taken, infallibly succeeds; (see ~~108~~Revelation 3:18). And he is council for them; he appears for them in court; introduces their persons, and presents their petitions to his Father; pleads their cause, is their advocate, answers to all charges and accusations; and calls for and requires, in point of law and justice, every blessing of goodness for them. “Sound wisdom” belongs to Christ; “wisdom”, from whence he has his name in this book; “sound” wisdom, such as is solid and substantial, real and true, in opposition to the wisdom of the world, to knowledge falsely so called, to carnal, sensual, and earthly wisdom. The Gospel may be meant, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery; sound doctrine, a form of sound words, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus: both grace and glory may be intended, which are both in the gift of Christ; grace is that “wisdom” which he makes his people to “know in the hidden part”; and glory is that “sound wisdom” laid up for the righteous, the better and more enduring substance in heaven. The word here used signifies essence or substance; and some render it, “whatsoever is”;<sup>f220</sup> whatever has a being, that is Christ’s; all creatures are his, the earth and the fulness of it, and they that dwell therein;

*I [am] understanding*; essentially as a divine person; his understanding is infinite; there is no searching of it; it reaches to all persons and things: as Mediator, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding rests on him without measure, by which he was furnished for his prophetic office; as man, his understanding was amazing to all that knew him, and heard him. Christ not only has an understanding, but he is understanding itself; he is the fountain, author, and giver of understanding; of all the natural understanding there is in men; of the light of nature and reason, of those intellectual faculties

which men are possessed of; and of all the spiritual understanding in divine things, which his people are partakers of, (~~Gen~~ 1 John 5:20);

*I have strength*; as the mighty God; which appears in his creation of all things out of nothing, in his upholding all things by his power, and in his government of the world. As Mediator, he has the Spirit of might upon him; all power in heaven and earth is given him; his strength is manifest in the salvation of his people, when he came travelling in the greatness of it to save them; by fulfilling the law for them; by bearing their sins, and the punishment due to them; and by destroying all their enemies: and in his plucking them out of the hands of Satan, out of the burning, out of the mire and clay at conversion; in bearing and supporting them under all their burdens, afflictions, and temptations, and in preserving them safe to his kingdom and glory; and in giving them strength in the mean time to bear the cross, to withstand temptations and corruptions, to exercise the graces of the spirit, and perform the duties of religion.

**Ver. 15.** *By me kings reign*, etc.] Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; they are made kings by him, and are under him; he sets them up, and deposes them at pleasure; they have their kingdoms, crowns, and sceptres from him, and are accountable to him. The Syriac version renders it, “for me”; it is for the sake of Christ they reign; and they ought to seek his glory, and the good of his kingdom and interest. Moreover, as it is by him they are set up as kings and governors, and are preserved and continued in their governments by him; so it is by him that they rule well who do so, that they reign justly, wisely, happily, and successfully; all the wisdom which appears in their administrations is all from him; all those wise laws, which are enacted by them for the good of their subjects, is owing to the wisdom and prudence he gives them;

*and princes decree justice*; these may design such who are under kings, are assisting to them in government; who are of their privy council, and give advice in making laws, and putting them into execution. Here it particularly regards their making just and righteous laws for the good of the state, in which they are employed by kings; or their advising to them, and assisting in drawing them up: and now all the wisdom that is necessary hereunto, and which is conspicuous herein, is all from Christ; who has the spirit of princes in his hands, and orders and directs them as he pleases. The Targum is,

“I anoint princes with justice.”

**Ver. 16.** *By me princes rule*, etc.] All governors of provinces and cities, who are under the king as supreme; the discharge of whose office in a right manner requires much wisdom, prudence, justice, and integrity; all which they have from Christ, as well as their power of ruling, that rule well;

*and nobles, [even] all the judges of the earth*; the word<sup>f221</sup> for nobles signifies persons of a “free” spirit, generous, bountiful men; such as are called “benefactors”, (<sup>4025</sup>Luke 22:25); so one of the Ptolemys, king of Egypt, was called Evergetes. Such who govern, not in a cruel and rigorous manner, but with clemency and gentleness; who, as they are “free” and noble themselves, their subjects are a free people, and enjoy their privileges and liberties fully and quietly. And “the judges of the earth” are such, as sit on benches of justice, hear and try causes, and pass sentence on men; which requires great skill and knowledge, and much faithfulness and integrity, which all that perform their office aright have from Christ. How great therefore must he be! how wise and just! from whom all rulers, supreme and subordinate, have their power; prudence, generosity, and justice!

**Ver. 17.** *I love them that love me*, etc.] Those that love Christ are such who are born again, and have a spiritual and experimental knowledge of him; that believe in him, have seen his loveliness, have had his love shed abroad in their hearts, and a view of his fulness and suitableness; some comfortable apprehensions of their relation to him, and interest in him, and are indulged with communion with him: the love with which such souls love Christ springs from their very hearts, is cordial and sincere; it gives him the preference to all objects, to all creatures, angels or men, and to all creature enjoyments; it is drawn out to all of Christ, and to all that belong to him, or are his; and though it may be lost, become remiss and abate in its fervency, it cannot be lost; and is what is very acceptable to Christ, and highly esteemed of by him: it shows itself by a high veneration for the truths and doctrines of his Gospel; by a strict regard to his commands and ordinances; by a hearty affection for his people; by parting with and bearing all for his sake; a carefulness of offending him, and losing his company; by an earnest desire after his presence, and delight in it, and by a concern at his absence; by a diligent inquiry after him in the use of means until he is found, and by the joy expressed at finding of him: now such Christ loves; not that he begins to love his people when they begin to love him, for he

loved them from everlasting; as appears by his espousing their persons, undertaking their cause, and taking the care and charge of their persons, grace, and glory, so early; and by his assumption of their nature in time, and by his suffering and dying for them; all which were before they had any love to him: but this points out and describes the persons, who may be assured of the love of Christ to them, since their love to him springs from his to them; besides, it designs some fresh manifestations of his love, and the continuance of it; as well as suggests that he has future blessings to bestow on such, as fresh marks of his affection, and instances of his love to them; such as granting them his gracious presence, giving them more grace; causing all things, even afflictions, to work together for their good; preserving and keeping them from falling, and at last giving them eternal glory and happiness; see (<sup>4912</sup>John 14:21-23);

*and those that seek me early shall find me*: and they are such who see their need of Christ, and know the worth of him; and those seek to him in the use of means, the word and ordinances, and as assisted by his Spirit and grace, for pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, which are only to be had in him: and they may be said to “seek [him] early”, or “morning him”<sup>f222</sup>, who seek him in the morning of youth, or in the first place, above all things else, and that with the greatest eagerness and earnestness, diligence and importunity; and such always are successful; they “find” Christ, and life, righteousness, and salvation in him, and every blessing, and therefore are happy, (see Gill on “<sup>4183</sup>Proverbs 3:13”).

**Ver. 18.** *Riches and honour [are] with me*, etc.] By “riches” are meant not the riches of Christ’s person, the perfections of his nature, his works, and his vast empire over all creatures, and the revenues arising from thence, which though durable, yet not communicable; not temporal riches, which, though with him, and at his dispose, yet these, at least a large share of them, and in common, is not given to his people, nor are they durable; but the riches of grace, redeeming, justifying, pardoning, and sanctifying grace, are intended, and the riches of glory in another world: and so “honour” designs not that which he has as a divine Person, or as Mediator, which is incommunicable; much less temporal honour, for though this is with him and from him, as appears (<sup>4185</sup>Proverbs 8:15,16); yet it is not usually given to his followers, who are not the great and noble, but generally reckoned the offscouring of all things; nor is such honour durable; but the honour he gives his people lies in their being espoused to him, in being the sons of

God through him, in being made by him kings and priests unto God, and in reigning with him here and for ever;

*[yea], durable riches and righteousness*; which last some understand as another adjunct and epithet of riches, and represent them in opposition to mammon of unrighteousness, or to riches either ill-gotten or ill-managed; and expresses another property of Christ's riches of grace and glory, as being what are come by in a way of righteousness into his hands, and are distributed faithfully by him; though rather it respects a distinct thing which is with Christ, and in his hands to give, even his justifying righteousness, consisting of his active and passive obedience, which he has wrought out, is in him, and given by him to his people; and is what is called the righteousness of God and of faith; which secures from condemnation and entitles to eternal life; and is an everlasting one, as durable as his riches are, which are his fulness that ever continues with him: pardon is "simul" and "semel",<sup>f223</sup> and for ever; sanctifying grace, as faith, hope, and love, always abide; and about the riches of glory there can be no doubt of the permanency of them; and the same may be said of honour both here and hereafter.

**Ver. 19.** *My fruit [is] better than gold, yea, than fine gold*, etc.] This is said in allusion to the fruit that grows on trees, Wisdom, or Christ, being a tree of life, (see Gill on "<sup><2188></sup>Proverbs 3:18"); and so he is compared to other trees, (<sup><2188></sup>Song of Solomon 2:3 <sup><2848></sup>Hosea 14:8). His "fruit" are the blessings of grace, such as redemption, reconciliation, pardon, justification, adoption, and eternal life; these are his by covenant, are procured by him, and are communicated from him; also the graces of his Spirit called fruits, as faith, hope, love, etc. of which he is the author and object; and even good works, the fruits of his grace; they are done in virtue of union to him, by his strength, and are directed to his glory: and all these, especially his grace and the blessings of it, are preferable to the finest gold; they are more valuable as to their intrinsic worth and excellency; they are more useful and profitable, being for the good and welfare of immortal souls; and they are more satisfying and more lasting, and which cannot be obtained with such a corruptible thing as gold is;

*and my revenue than choice silver*; as the former word refers to fruits that grow on trees, this to such as spring from seed sown in the earth; (see <sup><8239></sup>Leviticus 23:39), where the same word is used as here, and is also rendered "revenue" in (<sup><2423></sup>Jeremiah 12:13); Christ himself is compared to

seed, and so his word, (~~4824~~ John 12:24 ~~4881~~ Luke 8:11); and the fruit or revenue thereof is the same as before: or else the allusion is to the profit arising from riches, from estates, and their annual rent; or from money put out to use, or improved by commerce, and so signifies the same with the gain and merchandise of wisdom, (see Gill on "~~4084~~ Proverbs 3:14"). Aben Ezra construes the words thus, "my revenue is choicer than silver"; but our version is best.

**Ver. 20.** *I lead in the way of righteousness*, etc.] As a king his subjects, a shepherd his flock; as a guide to persons that are ignorant and out of the way; as parents their children, teaching them to go; or as a master his scholars: and the way Wisdom, or Christ, leads his people in, is "the way of righteousness"; the doctrine of righteousness, or the way and manner of a sinner's justification in the sight of God; all men are out of the way of it, and are ignorant of the right way; Christ leads them into it: he leads them off of their own righteousness by showing that it does not deserve the name of one; that it is unacceptable to God, unprofitable to him, and insufficient to justify them before him; and he leads them to his own righteousness, which he has wrought out; and shows them that this is answerable to the demands of law and justice, is acceptable to God, and imputed by him without works; and this he does in his word and by his Spirit: and in this way of righteousness he leads them into his Father's presence with acceptance; to himself, in which he beholds them with pleasure; and to eternal glory, which gives them a title to it: he also leads into the practice of righteousness; he teaches them, and they learn of him works of righteousness; he goes before them by way of example, and he gives them his Spirit and grace to enable them to perform them; and which may more especially be intended in the next clause;

*in the midst of the paths of judgment*: of truth and holiness; in his commandments and ordinances; in all which they are led not against their wills but with them; and not only walk but run with the greatest cheerfulness in those ways and paths of his.

**Ver. 21.** *That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance*, etc.] Substantial blessings, blessings indeed, as all spiritual ones are; and substantial grace, as every grace is; and substantial communion with God and Christ, which is a real thing, and had in the way of righteousness; also substantial happiness hereafter, as eternal life is; which being expressed by "substance", or "that which is"<sup>f224</sup>, as the word used signifies, denotes the

reality of it; it being not only actually promised, prepared, and laid up for the saints, but is what is known by them now, and of which they have the earnest and pledge; as also the solidity of it, being opposed to the vain and shadowy things of this life; as well as the riches, valuableness, and continuance of it; it is enduring substance, which cannot be wasted nor taken away; which is in its own nature incorruptible, and the saints will always continue to enjoy it. God himself may be meant, who is most eminently **Ϟ**, that which is, a self-existent Being, and the Being of beings, essence itself, and of whom the saints are heirs, and who will be their portion now and for ever, (<sup><4187></sup>Romans 8:17 <sup><4973></sup>Psalm 73:26); and such that shall enjoy this inheritance are those that “love” Christ; to them it is promised, for them it is prepared, and to them it will be given, (<sup><3012></sup>James 1:12) (<sup><4119></sup>1 Corinthians 2:9 <sup><5048></sup>2 Timothy 4:8), not that their love to Christ is the meritorious cause of so valuable a blessing; but this describes the persons that shall have it, and points out a proper disposition for it, without which none would be fit to enjoy it; and besides there is a connection between grace and glory; to which may be added, that this shows that Christ does not love in word only, saying, “I love them that love me”, (<sup><1087></sup>Proverbs 8:17); but in deed also; and how much he esteems the love of his people; and it is designed to encourage the faith and hope of weak believers, who, though they do not so strongly believe in Christ, yet truly love him. And be it further observed, that this substance is enjoyed by way of inheritance; it is not purchased, nor acquired, but bequeathed and given to the children of God by their heavenly Father, and comes to them through the death of Christ the testator, and is for ever, as inheritances are; and so Aben Ezra observes, that it signifies an eternal possession;

*and I will fill their treasures*; the treasures of their hearts, (<sup><4125></sup>Matthew 12:35); Christ now fills their understandings with spiritual knowledge, their souls with grace, their minds with peace and joy, and their hearts with food and gladness; and hereafter he will fill them to full satisfaction with knowledge, holiness, and joy, and will be all in all to them.

**Ver. 22.** *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way*, etc.] Not “created me”, as the Targum and the Septuagint version; which version Arius following gave birth to his pernicious doctrine; who from hence concluded Christ is a creature, and was the first creature that God made, not of the same but of a like nature with himself, in some moment or period of eternity; and by whom he made all others: the Word, or Wisdom of God is never said to be created; and if as such he was created, God must have



been without his Wisdom before he was created; besides, Christ, as the Word and Wisdom of God, is the Creator of all things, and not created, (<sup><800></sup>John 1:1-3); but this possession is not in right of creation, as the word is sometimes used, (<sup><000></sup>Genesis 4:1 <sup><0306></sup>Deuteronomy 32:6); it might be more truly rendered, “the Lord begat me”, as the word is translated by the Septuagint in (<sup><3035></sup>Zechariah 13:5); it denotes the Lord’s having, possessing, and enjoying his word and wisdom as his own proper Son; which possession of him is expressed by his being with him and in him, and in his bosom, and as one brought forth and brought up by him; as he was “in the beginning of his way” of creation, when he went forth in his wisdom and power, and created all things; then he did possess his Son, and made use of him, for by him he made the worlds: and “in the beginning of his way” of grace, which was before his way of creation; he began with him when he first went out in acts of grace towards his people; his first thoughts, purposes, and decrees concerning their happiness, were in him; the choice of their persons was made in him; God was in him contriving the scheme of their peace, reconciliation, and salvation; the covenant of grace was made with him, and all fulness of grace was treasured up in him: the words may be rendered, “the Lord possessed me, the beginning of his way”<sup><f225></sup>; that is, who am the beginning, as he is; the beginning of the creation of God, the first cause, the efficient of it, both old and new; see (<sup><5008></sup>Colossians 1:18 <sup><6004></sup>Revelation 3:14). So Aben Ezra, who compares with this (<sup><8009></sup>Job 40:19). This shows the real and actual existence of Christ from eternity, his relation to Jehovah his Father, his nearness to him, equality with him, and distinction from him: it is added, for further illustration and confirmation’s sake,

*before his works of old*; the creation of the heavens and the earth; a detail of which there is in the following verses.

**Ver. 23.** *I was set up from everlasting*, etc.] I, a person, and not a quality; a person, and not a nature; the person of Christ as the Son of God, and not the human nature of Christ, which then did not exist; this phrase designs the ordination and constitution of Christ in his office as Mediator. So the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “I was ordained”; Christ was foreordained to be the Redeemer and Saviour of men, to be the propitiation for their sins, to be the head of the church, and the Judge of the world. It intends likewise his inauguration into his office, and his investiture with it; and because anointing with oil was used in installing persons into the offices of prophet, priest, and king; hence Christ’s instalment into his office as

Mediator is here expressed by an anointing; for the words may be rendered, “I was anointed”<sup>f226</sup>; it takes in all that goes to his constitution as Mediator, his call, appointment, and investiture; and the whole of his office, every part and branch of it; and chiefly his kingly office, with reference to which the same word is used (<sup><4916></sup>Psalm 2:6); and so Gersom paraphrases it,

“and there were given to me power, dominion, and greatness;”

all which suppose the eternity of his person; for had he not existed from everlasting, he could not have been set up, and anointed as Mediator, or invested with his office as such;

*from the beginning, or ever the earth was*; or from the first of the earth, or the original of it; that is, before all time, before the earth or anything was created; this further confirms the eternal existence of Christ’s person, the antiquity of his office, the early provision of grace in him as Mediator for his people, and may lead to entertain high and honourable thoughts of him.

**Ver. 24.** *When [there were] no depths, I was brought forth*, etc.] Not only in the decree of God, as the head of the elect; foreordained to be the Redeemer of them, and to be the propitiation for their sins; and appointed the Judge of the world, and heir of all things; but “was begotten”, as the Targum and Syriac version; the Septuagint is, “he begot me”; and so it is to be understood of the eternal generation and sonship of Christ; for the word *ytllwj* is used of generation, (<sup><4857></sup>Job 15:7 <sup><4916></sup>Psalm 51:5). Christ is the firstborn of every creature, begotten, born, and brought forth before any creature was in being; (see <sup><4917></sup>Psalm 2:7); before the depths of the great sea were formed, for they were made by him, (<sup><4981></sup>Psalm 95:1,5); when there were no depths, but the infinite being and perfections of God, and the thoughts and purposes of his heart, which are his deep things, (<sup><4810></sup>Job 11:7,8 <sup><4925></sup>Psalm 92:5 <sup><4121></sup>1 Corinthians 2:10);

*when [there were] no fountains abounding with water*; or “heavy”, or “honoured”<sup>f227</sup> with it; when the fountains of the great deep were not; and when there were no other fountains which form rivers, and water the earth; when there were none but God the fountain of living waters; then was Christ as the only begotten son of God; and who was also set up as the fountain of all grace, life, and salvation for his people.

**Ver. 25.** *Before the mountains were settled*, etc.] “Plunged”<sup>f228</sup>, or fixed in the earth; and which was done by the great strength of the Lord, upon their

proper bases, (<sup><1816></sup>Psalm 65:6); and which were “aborigine”, or from the beginning of the world, and therefore called the ancient mountains, (<sup><1835></sup>Deuteronomy 33:15); to be before the mountains is a periphrasis of eternity, and is a phrase expressive of God’s eternity; and being here used of the Son’s, shows his eternity is the same with his Father’s, (<sup><1816></sup>Psalm 90:2);

*before the hills was I brought forth*; which is repeated partly to show the importance of it; this being a matter of infinite moment and concern, and deserving of the strictest attention and observation; and partly to show the certainty of it; the eternal generation of Christ being an article of faith most surely to be believed.

**Ver. 26.** *While as yet he had not made the earth*, etc.] That is, the Lord, who possessed Wisdom, or Christ, and by whom he was set up; he as yet had not made the earth, when this was done; this shows that the earth had a beginning, contrary to those philosophers who asserted the eternity of it; that Christ was before that was, for it was made by him; and consequently he must be eternal, and was before any man was, since the earth was made before man; and that he was not of the earth, earthy, as was the first man;

*nor the fields*; the plain parts of the earth, in opposition to the mountains and hills before mentioned; the valleys and meadows that lay between them, full of grass, flowers, and fruits; pleasant to behold, and profitable to be enjoyed; so the word is also rendered (<sup><1850></sup>Job 5:10); and “valleys”, by the Targum here: or the “out parts”<sup>f229</sup>; the extremities of the earth, the two poles of it; the uninhabitable parts of the earth, as distinct from the habitable part of it afterwards mentioned: or all with out it; the ambient and spacious ether;

*nor the highest part of the dust of the world*: meaning, not the mountains and hills, which are before mentioned, and are the highest part of the earth; but rather “the chief of the dust of the earth”<sup>f230</sup>, as the words may be rendered; these are the metals and minerals within it; the gold, silver, and precious stones, of which we read very early, (<sup><1812></sup>Genesis 2:12); or the “beginning”, the first and chief, the “prima materia”, even the dusts of the world, out of which man and all the creatures were made, (<sup><1815></sup>Genesis 2:6 3:19 <sup><1849></sup>Job 4:19 <sup><1810></sup>Ecclesiastes 3:20 12:7). Dr. Lister<sup>f231</sup> was of opinion that sand was once the most exterior and general cover of the surface of the whole earth; partly because all our northern mountains are covered with it, more or less, at this day; and partly because of its great hardness,

durableness, and unalterable quality; and the higher the mountains be, he says, still the more and coarser the sand is; and if so, this might with propriety be called the highest part of the dust of the earth. But Christ was before any of them, as well as is more excellent than they. Or it may be man is designed, who was made of the dust of the earth; even the first man Adam, so Jarchi, (<sup><OC17></sup>Genesis 2:7); before whom Christ was: yea, the human nature of Christ himself may be meant, which is fairer than any of the children of men, and the chief of all the individuals of human nature; being without sin, and united to the Son of God, and also the curious workmanship of the Spirit of God. Now Christ, as the Son of God, as the only begotten of the Father, existed before his human nature did, or before he was the Son of man.

**Ver. 27.** *When he prepared the heavens, I [was] there*, etc.] Made, beautified, and adorned them; when he gave them their form, figure, magnitude, and motion; when he garnished them with the sun, moon, and stars; then was Christ present, not as a mere spectator, but as a co-worker; (see <sup><S110></sup>Hebrews 1:10); and even the third heaven, the place and state of glorified saints, prepared for them from the foundation of the world, (<sup><A254></sup>Matthew 25:34);

*when he set a compass upon the face of the depth*: or “compassed the waters with bounds”, as Job says, (<sup><B50></sup>Proverbs 26:10); or made the earth with the sea globular, which make one terraqueous globe: or “made a circle”<sup>f232</sup>; all around it, called the circle of the earth, on which he sits, (<sup><A12></sup>Isaiah 40:22); this compass may design the vast expanse or firmament of heaven, which is stretched and drawn around the terraqueous globe as a canopy or curtain. Christ was with his Father on the first day’s creation of the heavens; and on the second day, when the firmament was made, and was before them both.

**Ver. 28.** *When he established the clouds above*, etc.] In which the waters are bound, and yet are not rent under them; and where, in the thin air, they hang heavy with them; where they are weighed by measure, and a decree made for them when they shall fall; and when they do, the Lord makes small the drops of water, which the clouds do drop and distil on men abundantly; the spreadings of which are beyond understanding, and are unaccountable, and must be referred to the power of God; who has settled and established them in the heavens, and the laws of them, (<sup><B88></sup>Job 26:8 28:25,26 38:28,29);

*when he strengthened the fountains of the deep*; gave them strength, and still continues it, to cast out their waters, which run into the main sea, and feed and fill it, and return to their place again; which strength of flowing and reflowing can be attributed to nothing else but to the great power of God, (<sup><0071></sup>Genesis 7:11 <sup><2007></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:7).

**Ver. 29.** *When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment*, etc.] A perpetual decree, which never has been altered nor never will: he has placed the sand for the bounds of the sea everywhere, which it cannot pass, though its waves toss, foam, and roar; this is his decreed place, with which he has shut it up, as with doors, bars, and bolts; so that those proud waves may come hitherto and no further, (<sup><2162></sup>Jeremiah 5:22 <sup><1880></sup>Job 38:10,11);

*when he appointed the foundations of the earth*; which are laid on the seas and floods; nay, the earth is hung like a ball in the air upon nothing; and yet its foundations are such as that it shall not be removed; being the purpose and decree, the power and might, of the Lord himself, (<sup><1847></sup>Job 26:7 <sup><4242></sup>Psalms 24:2 104:5). Now Christ was present when those were laid, for he was concerned in the laying of them himself, (<sup><8010></sup>Hebrews 1:10). The Lord asks Job where he was then, (<sup><1880></sup>Job 38:4); he was not there in being, but Christ was.

**Ver. 30.** *Then I was by him, [as] one brought up [with him]*, etc.] He was then, and from all eternity, “by him”, or “with him”<sup>f233</sup>; which denotes his co-existence with God, and his relation to him as his Father; his nearness to him, his equality with him, and his distinction from him: he was by him when the names of God’s elect were put down in the book of life; he was by him and with him in the council and covenant of grace and peace; and so in the creation of all things, and has been ever since; not as a onlooker, but as a party concerned; and not as subordinate and inferior to his Father, but equal with him. The word  $\hat{w}ma$ , translated “brought up”, is differently rendered; Symmachus and Theodotion render it “strengthened”; as Christ was set up in his mediatorial office, he was strengthened in it by his Father; and was in his view, council, and covenant, the man of his right hand, made strong for himself: the Targum renders it “faithful”, so the Tigurine version; as Christ was to him that appointed him, faithful to all he promised and was intrusted with. Many translate it an “artificer” or “workman”<sup>f234</sup>, as  $\hat{m}a$  in (<sup><2001></sup>Song of Solomon 7:1); and so Christ was a co-worker, a worker with God in the making of all things, the heavens, earth, and sea,

and all in there; not as an instrument, but as a co-efficient cause of them; which is a proof of his proper deity, and equality with God. But others think the word has the sense of nursing, or being nursed, educated, or brought up. Some <sup>f235</sup> take it actively, as in (<sup>08016</sup>Ruth 4:16) (<sup>07017</sup>Esther 2:7 <sup>23423</sup>Isaiah 49:23); and interpret it of Christ's nursing the creation, or cherishing, supporting, and preserving all creatures in their being when made; particularly of his nourishing and cherishing the church and people of God committed to his care. Others <sup>f236</sup> passively, of his being "brought up", as our version; and so the Latin interpreter of the Targum renders it "nursed up at his side"; which expresses the tender regard of his Father to him, as his begotten Son; in whose bosom he lay and was bore, as a nursing father bears his son in his bosom, (<sup>04112</sup>Numbers 11:12); and by whom, as Mediator, he was trained up in the performance of his office;

*and I was daily his delight*; or "delights"<sup>f237</sup>; exceeding delightful to him. The Father loved the Son from all eternity, with a love of complacency and delight, (<sup>08174</sup>John 17:24 <sup>04117</sup>Matthew 3:17); this delight was founded in relation to him, in sonship; and in likeness, he being the express image of his person; in sameness of nature, he being of the same nature and perfections with his Father: and he delighted in him as a workman, in the works which he did, being the same he saw him do; and in him as Mediator, in his constitution as such, and in engaging as a surety, to obey and suffer in the stead of his people, (<sup>02011</sup>Isaiah 42:1); he not only delighted in him day by day, throughout the six days of the creation, when he was by him as a workman, but before, and even from the days of eternity; from the date of his commencement as Mediator; in the foreviews of his human nature, obeying and suffering in it; and of the salvation of the elect by him, and of his own glory in it;

*rejoicing always before him*; being always in his presence, and acceptable to him; rejoicing in having the same nature and perfections with him, and in the relation he stood in to him; and also in the view of the works of creation and redemption he would be jointly concerned in with him; which joy always did and ever will continue. There is a mutual pleasure and delight which the Father and Son have in each other, and in all that they are concerned; and especially in what respects the salvation of the chosen people. The allusion in the word used in this clause is to children's playing in the presence of their parents; which is a diversion to the one, and a pleasure to the other.

**Ver. 31.** *Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth,* etc.] In that part of the earth which is habitable; in filling it with inhabitants; in preserving and sustaining it in being, and the inhabitants of it; in governing it, and ordering all things in it for the best, according to his infinite wisdom and the counsel of his will; in bestowing the bounties of his providence, and in being the light and life of men: all which were done by him with the greatest ease, as well as pleasure and delight; it was a kind of sport or play unto him, as the word used signifies<sup>f238</sup>; and so in (<sup><2080></sup>Proverbs 8:30), which shows the allusion is to a nurse child. Moreover, this may have a peculiar view to the saints and people of God, and to those particular spots of ground in God's earth where they should dwell; for as the earth was made, and is continued on their account; so the very place of their birth and abode, as well as of their conversion, were afore appointed and fixed by the Lord, which Christ in his eternal mind had a foreview of, and took a pleasure in: besides, they themselves are the habitation of God, and Christ, and the blessed Spirit; the church of God is his dwelling place on earth, where he delights to dwell, over whom he rejoices to do good, and whom he makes glad; so some read the words, "making glad the habitable part of his earth"<sup>f239</sup>. Once more, the new earth, which will be after this is passed, away, may be truly called his, or the second Adam's earth; and in which only righteous persons shall dwell, and with whom the tabernacle of God shall be, or with whom Christ shall dwell a thousand years; and in the foreview of this he may be thought to take delight and pleasure, even before the world was. The human nature of Christ may not be amiss thought of, which was formed in the lower parts of the earth, and therefore he is called the fruit of the earth, (<sup><2095></sup>Psalm 139:15) (<sup><2092></sup>Isaiah 4:2); and may be said to be habitable, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells, and the Word tabernacled, and is the true tabernacle; in the foreview of which the Son of God rejoiced, as to be produced without sin by the Holy Spirit, and adorned with his graces, and to be united to his person; in which he was to work out the salvation of his people, and be glorified; and his, joy, in the foreview of it, appears by his frequent appearances in a human form before his actual incarnation, as "preludiums" of it;

*and my delights [were] with the sons of men;* or of Adam, of fallen Adam; not with angels, but with men; not with all men, only some; and those as considered as the objects of his own and his Father's love; as beheld in the glass of his Father's decrees; as chosen in him, and given him by his Father; as his children, and as his spouse and bride. The word for "delights" is not

only in the plural number, but its two first radical letters are doubled, which, in the Hebrew language, increases the signification of the word; and so expresses the exceeding great delight and pleasure which Christ took in his people from everlasting; his love was then a love of the utmost complacency and delight, and continued, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, though by nature children of wrath, and transgressors from the womb. This appears by his early engagement as a surety for them; by his espousing their persons and their cause; by assuming their nature in time; by suffering and dying in their room and stead, and working out salvation for them; by bearing them on his heart in heaven, and there interceding for them; by taking them out of a state of nature; by visiting them with his grace and presence; and by bringing them, through a variety of trials, safe to his kingdom and glory.

**Ver. 32.** *Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children,* etc.] Children of his and his Father, with whom his delights were; predestinated to the adoption of children; children of the covenant and promise, given to him as such in the covenant; for whom he became man, suffered and died, to gather together regenerated ones, by which they appear to be the children of God: these Wisdom here addresses in the most affectionate manner; Christ, having finished the account and description of himself, reassumes his former exhortation, (<sup>208B</sup>Proverbs 8:5-10); and enforces it by the several particulars in the above description. From the consideration of his wisdom, riches, eternity, nearness to God, and his delights with men, he exhorts them to “hearken” to him, to his voice in the Gospel, and to what he says there; such who see themselves lost and perishing, the hungry and thirsty, the naked and weary, the disconsolate and afflicted, the poor and indigent; and also to his voice in his precepts and commands, to embrace his doctrines, and submit to his ordinances;

*for blessed [are they that] keep my ways;* it is a happiness to be in the ways of Christ, to be kept in them, and to keep them; Christ has promised and does vouchsafe his presence in them; there is a pleasure enjoyed in observing them; and though not for keeping, yet in keeping Christ’s commands, there is great reward, (<sup>199B</sup>Psalms 19:11).

**Ver. 33.** *Hear instruction,* etc.] The instruction of wisdom, the Gospel of Christ; which instructs men in things relating to God the Father; as that he is the God and Father of his people, the God of all grace, the giver and sender of Christ, and all good things by him; in things respecting Christ, his



person, office, grace, and righteousness; in things that appertain to the Spirit of God, his deity, personality, and operations of grace on the souls of men; in the knowledge of themselves, their impurity, impotence, and unrighteousness; and in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, and therefore to be hearkened to;

*and be wise*; this is the way to be wise to that which is good, both as to the knowledge and practice of it; to be wise unto salvation, and with respect to everlasting things and a future state; and the Gospel instruction teaches men to behave wisely, to walk in wisdom towards them that are without;

*and refuse it not*; for this is not to be wise, but to act the part of fools; and such as do so despise their own souls, show that they have no care of them, or concern for their eternal welfare, (<sup><3100></sup>Proverbs 1:7 15:32); for, if this is rejected, there is no escaping eternal damnation, (<sup><3008></sup>Hebrews 2:3).

**Ver. 34.** *Blessed [is] the man that heareth me*, etc.] Christ in his Gospel, as speaking by his ministers; for hearing them is hearing him, (<sup><2106></sup>Luke 10:16); they have their commission from him; are his ambassadors, and represent him; receive their gifts from him; speak according to his mind and will, revealed in his word, and preach him himself. This shows with what attention and reverence the Gospel should be heard; what credit should be given unto it; how it ought to be put in practice; this accounts for the efficacy of it on the souls of men, it being no other than the word of Christ, or Christ himself speaking; and from hence it appears how sad and dreadful will be the case of such that despise it: to hear it is the way to have the knowledge of Christ, and an increase of it; faith in Christ, and a growth therein; the joy of faith, and a furtherance of it; love to Christ, and aboundings in it; and to have spiritual food and nourishment; wherefore it is both the duty and privilege of persons to hear the Gospel of Christ, since these things come by it;

*watching daily at my gates*; the gates of Wisdom's house, the church of Christ, which are the public ordinances thereof; called in Scripture the gates of Zion, (<sup><3800></sup>Psalms 87:2); in allusion to the gates of cities, where Wisdom cries, or the ministers of Christ preach, (<sup><3102></sup>Proverbs 1:21 8:3); see (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 26:1,2); or to the gates of kings, palaces, where courtiers watch to be admitted and received as favourites, or to give in their petitions for themselves or others, (<sup><1760></sup>Esther 6:10). The church is the palace of the great King; it is an honour to be admitted here, to have a name and a place here, and to sit with the King at his table. Or to the door

of the tabernacle, where the people of Israel assembled for worship; or to the gates of the temple, where the priests and Levites watched, (<sup><129B></sup>Exodus 29:42 <sup><1940B></sup>Psalms 100:4 122:2). “Watching” is opposed to sleep, both to bodily sleep and to sleepy frames of soul; and to intemperance, not only by eating and drinking, but with the cares of this life; and it denotes circumspection, diligence, and attention. Here sensible sinners watch in the ministry of the word and ordinances, if anything drops that they can catch at, suitable to their case and circumstances; as Benhadad’s servants did, (<sup><121B></sup>1 Kings 20:33); and here souls, under darkness and desertion, watch for spiritual light and comfort, as they that watch for the morning; and here every believer watches for his spiritual edification and establishment in the truth; and which should be “daily” or “day after day”, one Lord’s day after another; taking all opportunities, in season and out of season, consistent with the duties of their calling, to hear the word; and so they are to continue to the end of life; for happy is he that shall be found thus watching when his Lord cometh, (<sup><10237></sup>Luke 12:37);

*waiting at the posts of my doors*; either in allusion to scholars, who wait the opening of the school doors to go in first, as Jarchi observes: Christ is a teacher; sensible souls are his disciples or scholars; the church is the school where they learn of him, and learn him; and waiting at the door posts of it shows early seeking to Christ, and eagerness for instruction from him, (<sup><1213B></sup>Luke 21:38). Or the allusion may be to clients, waiting at the doors of counsellors<sup>f240</sup>, for counsel, and for patronage and protection, to plead their cause for them; Christ is the wonderful Counsellor, the Advocate with the Father, the Redeemer, mighty and strong, to plead the cause of his people; and therefore it is right to wait at his doors, with whom are counsel and sound wisdom: or else to beggars, that wait at the door for alms; who knock, and wait until the door is opened; tell their case, and wait for relief; receive repulses, and wait still; and will not depart till something is given. So saints should wait at the throne of grace, and upon the word and ordinances, for answers of prayer, performance of promises, and the presence of God and Christ: and so should sinners wait on the outward ministry of the word, remembering the ease of the poor man at the pool, who waited long, and at last had a cure, (<sup><111B></sup>John 5:5-7); since faith comes hereby; the Spirit and his graces, Christ and the knowledge of him, are had by such means, as follows.

**Ver. 35.** *For whoso findeth me findeth life*, etc.] Of finding Christ, (see Gill on “<sup><1013B></sup>Proverbs 3:13”). Such that find Christ find “life” or “lives”<sup>f241</sup>,

life spiritual and eternal; till they are found of Christ, and find him in effectual calling, they are dead; but, when called by his grace and converted, they live a life of justification and sanctification; they live a life of faith on Christ, of holiness from him, and communion with him: and such that find life in this sense find spiritual food in and from Christ, to support this life; and spiritual clothing, a justifying righteousness, called the justification of life, and which is the comfort of it; and rest in him, which makes life pleasant and delightful. Such an one finds that which of all things is most valuable, the life of his immortal soul; and which he can find nowhere else; and which, being found, can never be lost, for he finds eternal life in him; and has both a right unto it, and a meetness for it; yea, has the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it, (<sup><1051></sup>1 John 5:11,12);

*and shall obtain favour of the Lord*; by which is meant, not favour among men, though that is had from the Lord, it is he that gives it; nor temporal blessings, for in this sense favour is not to men of spiritual skill and wisdom; rather spiritual blessings, an access to God, acceptance with him; the presence of God, and communion with him; peace of conscience, and every needful supply of grace: but it seems most principally to design the love, grace, and good will of God, the spring and fountain of all blessings: and “obtaining” it does not intend getting an interest in it, for that is free and sovereign; nor is there anything in men, or done by them, which can procure it; but an enjoyment of it. The word<sup>f242</sup> used signifies a drawing it out, as water out of a well; and denotes that it is before it is drawn out or manifested; that it is in the heart of God, and lies hid there, from whence it flows as from a well or fountain; and is enjoyed in the exercise of the grace of faith; when the Lord remembers his people, and encompasses them about with it; or draws it out in great lengths, or grants continued and comfortable manifestations of it; (see <sup><1050></sup>Psalms 36:10).

**Ver. 36.** *But he that sinneth against me*, etc.] Or misses the mark, as the word<sup>f243</sup> signifies; and which is observed by Aben Ezra; see (<sup><1046></sup>Judges 20:16). Christ is the mark and scope of the counsels of God; of the covenant of grace; of the Scriptures; of the Gospel, the truths and promises of it; of the graces of the Spirit, and of all spiritual duties and services; and to whom we are to look for heaven and eternal happiness, (<sup><1084></sup>Philippians 3:14); and such miss the mark who look for salvation elsewhere, either by the light of nature; or by the law of Moses; or by any moral performances, or any religious exercises; or by a mere profession of religion, even the best. The word is frequently used for sinning; which is an aberration or

straying from, or missing, the mark of the law. Some sin against Christ doctrinally, who say he is not come in the flesh, or that Jesus is not the Christ; who deny his proper deity, his divine and eternal Sonship; and treat his blood, righteousness and salvation, with any degree of contempt: they sin against him practically that slight his Gospel, neglect his ordinances, transgress his laws, and evilly treat his people. Sinning against him is very aggravating; it is against him in whom all grace and mercy is, and from whom it comes to the sons of men; who is the Saviour of men from sin, and in whom alone salvation is. Wherefore everyone that thus sins against him

*wrongeth his own soul*; is injurious to it, and to the spiritual and eternal welfare of it; all sin is hurtful to the souls of men, especially sins against Christ; since there is no other Saviour but him, no other sacrifice for sin but his; and therefore to such there can be no other than a fearful looking for of judgment, that trample him under foot, and treat his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, in a contemptuous manner, (<sup>scribes</sup> Hebrews 10:26-29);

*all they that hate me*; as do the seed of the serpent, the whole world that lies in wickedness, all unregenerate persons, and even many professors of religion; they hate him privately, being without love to him, or loving others more than him; and positively and practically, by despising his Gospel, or not walking worthy of it; by disclaiming doctrines, casting off his yoke, and maltreating his people; all which arise from the corruption of their nature; for this hatred or enmity is original and natural; it is deeply rooted in their minds, and irreconcilable without the grace of God, and is always undeserved. Wherefore such are said to

*love death*; not formally and intentionally, for death in any shape cannot be desirable; not a corporeal death, and much less an eternal one; but interpretatively and consequentially, as they love that which brings death upon them both in body and soul, and so are reckoned to love death itself.