

CHAPTER 9

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 9

In this chapter, Wisdom, or Christ, is represented as having built a stately house or palace for the entertainment of his guests, (^{3100L}Proverbs 9:1); as having made large and suitable provisions for them, (^{3100E}Proverbs 9:2); and as having sent his servants to invite them to come and partake of them, and quit all other company but his, (^{3100B}Proverbs 9:3-6); When it is observed who are and who are not to be reprov'd, with the reasons of it, (^{3100T}Proverbs 9:7-9); and what is the sum and substance of true wisdom; and what the advantages of it both here and hereafter, (^{3100D}Proverbs 9:10-12); And the chapter is concluded with the description of the foolish woman, the opposite of Wisdom; who is represented as clamorous, simple, and ignorant, (^{3100S}Proverbs 9:13); and plying passengers that go by her door, and inviting them in to partake of her provisions, (^{3100A}Proverbs 9:14-17); the consequence of which is sure and certain death and destruction to her guests, (^{3100R}Proverbs 9:18).

Ver. 1. *Wisdom hath builded her house*, etc.] Or “Wisdoms”: of which see (^{3100D}Proverbs 1:20); Christ, the Wisdom of God, is meant, in whom and from whom all wisdom is. Various are the opinions concerning this house built by him. Some take it to be the whole circle of sciences, and the seven pillars to be the seven liberal ones, as Aben Ezra; though rather, as others, it may design the schools of the prophets, in which young men were trained up in the knowledge of divine and spiritual things. Some would have the whole universe to be meant, and the seven pillars to be the seven days of creation, as Jarchi; or the seven planets, as others: it is an odd notion of Grotius, that the human body is intended, with its five senses; and, to make up the number seven, adds the voice and memory: rather the human nature of Christ, which is a temple, a tabernacle, a house in which the Godhead dwells, is built by Wisdom, made without the hands of men; and then its seven pillars are the graces of the Spirit, by which it was supported and adorned; see (^{3100D}Isaiah 11:2); Some understand it of the temple of a regenerate man’s heart; in which God, Father, Son and Spirit, dwell. But there are two other senses, which bid fairest one of them to be right; either

the heavenly glory, the house not made with hands, Christ's Father's house, in which are many mansions for his people; and which is a city whose builder and maker is God, and is prepared by Christ; and stands firm upon the promises of God, the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and the grace of the blessed Spirit: or rather the church of Christ on earth, the house of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth; this is built by Christ upon himself, the rock and foundation; the materials of it are true believers, precious and lively stones; built up a spiritual house, and a fit and suitable habitation for God through the Spirit. Such a house there was under the Old Testament, and such an one there is under the New; and which is continually building up by Christ by means of the word and ordinances, and will continue to the end of the world; (see ^{<408>}1 Timothy 3:15 ^{<408>}Matthew 16:18 ^{<412>}1 Peter 2:5 ^{<412>}Hebrews 3:6);

she hath hewn out her seven pillars; ministers of the Gospel, compared to pillars for strength and stability, and for their being instrumental in supporting the interest and church of Christ; in allusion to the pillars in Solomon's temple, Jachin and Boaz; (see ^{<409>}Galatians 2:9 ^{<412>}1 Kings 7:21). These are said to be "hewn", being polished, beautified, and adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit by Christ, and thereby fitted for their work and service; and said to be "seven", because there is a complete and sufficient number of them, which Christ has provided, and always will provide for his churches, as long as they continue in the world. Though it may be these seven pillars may denote in general the firmness and solidity of this spiritual building, the church, and the continuance of it by the power of God; or they may have respect to the seven states of the church in so many periods of time, to last to the end of all things, signified by the seven churches in the book of the Revelation; so Cocceius^{f244}.

Ver. 2. *She hath killed her beasts*, etc.] Or, "her sacrifice"^{f245}: a crucified Christ, the principal of the provisions in Wisdom's house, or the church of Christ. The death of Christ was prefigured by the slaying of beasts for sacrifice under the old law; was foretold in prophecy, and is expressed by "killing" him in the New Testament; and which shows his death not to be natural, but violent. It is commonly ascribed to the Jews as a wicked action of theirs; but was not without the counsel and determination of God, and the will and consent of Christ; and this death was as a victim to justice, by way of sacrifice and satisfaction for sin, and was vicarious; was offered up in the room and stead of his people, to make atonement for their sins; and which is no other than himself, his soul and body, as in union with his

divine person; a sacrifice voluntarily offered up by himself, exceeding acceptable, and well pleasing to God; effectual to the purposes for which it was offered, and so never to be repeated: and his death, being a sacrifice, becomes a feast; a crucified Christ is suitable food for faith, as he is the Lamb in the midst of the throne, as though he had been slain; he is evidently set forth in the Gospel as crucified, and as such is spiritual and savoury food to his people, nourishing and strengthening, quickening and comforting, and extremely satisfying: thus the Gospel feast, in which the slain Lamb of God makes the chiefest part, is expressed in the same language as here, “my oxen and my fatlings are killed”, (^(217b)Matthew 22:4);

she hath mingled her wine; which also makes a considerable part in a banquet or feast, (^(178b)Esther 5:6); and the church is called a banqueting house, or a house of wine, (^(210b)Song of Solomon 2:4). The love of Christ is compared to wine, (^(210b)Song of Solomon 1:2,4); to old wine for the antiquity of it, being more ancient than ours to him, or than ourselves, even as old as eternity; to wine, on the lees well refined, for the purity of it, being free from all motives and conditions in the creature; to strong generous wine, which exhilarates and refreshes the weak, the weary, and distressed. The Gospel of Christ is also compared to wine, (^(210b)Song of Solomon 7:9); to old wine, for the ancient doctrines of it; and to neat wine, for the purity of it; and to generous wine, for the pleasure, joy, and comfort it gives: the blessings of grace which it exhibits may be so called from their comforting and refreshing nature, which are had freely, (^(210b)Isaiah 55:1); and so are the joys of heaven, (^(165b)Matthew 26:29). Now the “mingling” of this wine is in allusion to the mixture of wine, either with something richer, as spice, (^(210b)Song of Solomon 8:2); or rather with water, as Jarchi observes, which was usual in those hot countries, to make it fit and suitable drink for the bodies of men: the mixture was no doubt according to the strength of the wine; the wine of Sharon, being strong wine, was mixed two parts water and one wine^{f246}; which, with the ancients^{f247}, before three parts water and two wine; though, according to Plutarch^{f248}, they had three ways of mixing, which they called by three different names; the one was three parts water and two wine, the other three parts water and one wine, the third was one wine and two water; the first of them was reckoned the best mixture^{f249}: one Cerassus is said to be the inventor of mixing wine with water^{f250}; others ascribe it to Melampus^{f251}, and others to Amphictyon. And this, spiritually understood, does not design any impurity or degeneracy, such as is complained of, (^(210b)Isaiah 1:22); for the love of

Christ is pure and sovereign; the Gospel of Christ is free of all mixtures of human doctrines; the blessings of grace are all of free grace, without the mixture of men's works, and so is eternal life; salvation is all of free grace, and not by works of righteousness done by men mixed with it. But this may design the various displays of the love of Christ in the several acts of it, before time, in time, and now in heaven; or the joint display of the love of Father, Son, and Spirit, in the salvation of men, and the harmony and agreement of the divine perfections therein; and the publication of the Gospel, and the accommodation of the truths of it to the capacities of men: and perhaps some respect may be had to the blood and water that issued from the side of the slain Lamb of God, here prophetically and figuratively held forth;

she hath also furnished her table; which seems to design the ministration of the word, and the administration of ordinances in Gospel times; especially the ordinance of the supper, called the table of the Lord, (~~ACT~~ 1 Corinthians 10:21); a well-furnished table has a variety of excellent provision upon it: and such is the ministry of the Gospel, which is signified by various sorts of food, as bread, meat, milk, honey, and delicious fruits; and Christ, who is the sum and substance of it, is expressed by several things that are eatable, as by a slain lamb, a fatted calf, the hidden manna, the bread of God and of life, whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; and so is he held forth in the ordinances, particularly in the ordinance of the supper; the same he sits at, and welcomes his guests; encourages them to eat and drink, and sups with them himself. Here his broken body, and his blood shed, are presented to the faith of his people, to be eaten and drank in a spiritual manner; a table richly furnished indeed!

Ver. 3. *She hath sent forth her maidens*, etc.] Not moral virtues, or good works, which subserve the interest of Christ and religion, adorn the Gospel and its professors; nor the liberal arts and sciences, said to be handmaids to divinity; nor angels, ministering spirits to Christ; but the ministers of the Gospel, who being so called does not suppose or encourage women's preaching; but have the name to keep up the decency of the parable, and the propriety of the allegory: for since Wisdom is represented as a lady, a princess or queen, it is proper that her attendants should be maidens, or that she should employ such in inviting her guests; as Rebekah, Pharaoh's daughter, Esther, and others, are said to have their maidens to wait upon them: and besides, it very fitly expresses the character of Gospel ministers; as that they are the servants of Christ, followers of him, obsequious to him,

humble and modest, incorrupt in doctrine, pure in conversation, and whose voice is soft, pleasant, and delightful: being not the rough voice of the law, but the still, small, musical voice of the Gospel; a voice of love, grace, and mercy; of peace, pardon, and righteousness, liberty, life, and salvation; very charming, alluring, and drawing. These Christ has a property in; he chooses and calls them, and fits them for his service; and they give up themselves to him, and willingly engage in it. And these he “sends forth”: from him they have their mission and commission to preach the Gospel; to invite persons to the Gospel feast, to partake of the provisions he has made: he sends them forth publicly into the world, into all places where his people are, into the streets and lanes; yea, to the hedges and highways, to invite, and even to compel them to come in. And this supposes superiority in him, and authority given to them;

she crieth upon the high places of the city; this is to be understood of the preaching of the Gospel, both by Christ himself in person, in the city of Jerusalem, in the temple, and other public places; and by his ministers, and by him speaking in them there or elsewhere; and which is not a mere whisper, but a cry, a proclamation made aloud, and to be delivered with fervency and earnestness: the “city” may mean the church of God, and the “highest places” the ordinances thereof; and may in general denote the publicness of them; which are in the church, as the wings or pinnacles of the higher parts or buildings of a city are in that, as the word^{f252} signifies.

Ver. 4. *Whoso [is] simple, let him turn in hither*, etc.] Into Wisdom’s house, so well built and furnished; the church of Christ, as a house of instruction; a school, where such who are “simple”, weak, and foolish, may learn. Here are many instructors; saints instruct one another; ministers of the word are teachers; yea, Father, Son, and Spirit, here teach and instruct, and none teach like them. Here many lessons are to be learned concerning themselves, concerning Christ, and concerning their duty to God and men; all sorts of persons may learn here, such who know ever so much or ever so little. Or let him turn in here, as into an inn, into which passengers or travellers turn for accommodations; (see ^{<119>}Proverbs 9:15,16). The saints are travellers here, at a distance from their Father’s house, and need refreshment by the way; the church of God is an inn of good accommodations; here is room enough to entertain them; here are good lodgings for rest and safety, and good provisions, and all of free cost. And now these are the words of Wisdom, or Christ, either in person, or by his maidens, his ministers, inviting such who are “simple” to turn in hither, and

partake of the provisions in it; that is, not such who are quite stupid and insensible, sottish, incorrigible, and irreclaimable; but who are sensible of their folly and simplicity; who are but of weak capacities, apt to be credulous, and so easily imposed upon and deceived;

[as for] him that wanteth understanding; not the natural faculty of the understanding, nor an understanding of things natural and civil; but of things spiritual and evangelical, as of the grace of God; of salvation by Christ; of the work of the Spirit; of themselves and their state; of the Gospel, and the mysteries of it; and who are sensible of their ignorance and want of understanding; which is the first thing the Spirit of God convinces men of; or who are so in comparison of others, are weak in knowledge and experience. Now these Christ does not despise, but invites them into his house for instruction; and where can they be better? and who so fit and proper to be here, and be with Wisdom, than such as these?

she saith to him: as follows.

Ver. 5. *Come, eat of my bread*, etc.] Which stands for all the provisions of Christ's house; it designs the Gospel, which to a believer is more than his necessary food; and the ordinance of the supper, one of the symbols of which is bread; and more especially Christ himself, the bread of God, the living bread that came down from heaven, which is to be eaten by faith; and this only, for everything else is that which is not bread; and this daily, as the Israelites ate their manna; this is the believer's daily bread; and largely and freely, to which they are welcome by Christ; and with gladness and singleness of heart, joyfully and with sincerity;

and drink of the wine [which] I have mingled; of the love of Christ; or of the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit, which meet and mingle together: to "drink" of this is to partake of it by faith, and be persuaded of interest in it; this may be drank largely of, for there is enough, a river of it; and without danger, it is not intoxicating as wine, wherein is excess; and it may be had freely, without money and without price, (²⁷⁰⁰Song of Solomon 1:2,4 5:1 ²⁸⁰⁰Isaiah 55:1).

Ver. 6. *Forsake the foolish*, etc.] Foolish men and their company; not men of weak abilities in things natural and civil, or who are reckoned foolish by the world; for so the saints are, whose company is not to be neglected and forsaken; but such who are wickedly foolish, who are ignorant of divine things, and make a mock at sin and at religion; such company is very

unsuitable for Wisdom's guests; such as turn in to her house ought to forsake these; it is quite out of character for Wisdom's followers to be the companions of fools; it is very unprofitable to keep company with such vain men, yea, very pernicious and hurtful, and of very bad consequence; it corrupts good manners, and causes grief, and breaks peace, sooner or later; it is quite unbecoming them to converse with them; they are called out from among them by Christ, and should obey: and, besides, they have better company to attend unto: and they should also forsake "foolish"^{f253} things; the Septuagint version renders it, "foolishness"; and the Arabic version, "imprudence"; the Targum and Syriac version, "want of understanding", or "judgment"; foolish lusts, which are hurtful, and war against the soul, and which should be denied and abstained from; and all foolish ways, their own or others', which are dangerous and lead to ruin; and all foolish doctrines, such as are contrary to the Scriptures, to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; that tend to degrade any of the Persons of the Trinity, to obscure or lessen the grace of God in man's salvation, or to exalt the creature; all such are to be forsaken, shunned, and avoided, and by no means countenanced and encouraged;

and live; which may be considered either as an exhortation, as the foregoing; live on the provisions of Wisdom's house, on her bread and her wine; live on Christ himself by faith; live not as the foolish do, but as the wise; live not to yourselves, nor to the lusts of men, but to the will and glory of God; live not in sin, but unto righteousness; live not to the flesh, nor after it, but to and after the spirit: or as a promise by way of encouragement, and as enforcing the preceding exhortation, "and ye shall live"^{f254}; honourably, and not scandalously, as they do that keep company with the foolish; comfortably and delightfully, as they do that turn into Wisdom's house, and are her guests; such live in communion with Christ, and with his people; they live a spiritual life now, and shall live an eternal one hereafter;

and go in the way of understanding; as such do that quit the conversation of foolish men, and become the guests of Wisdom; such are in, and go in the way of understanding, who frequently attend the throne of grace, and ask wisdom of the Father of lights; the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of divine things, which they that ask have; Solomon got all his wisdom and understanding this way: such are in the way of it, and go in the way of it, who constantly and carefully read the Scriptures, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation; who go up to the house of the

Lord as often as they have opportunity, that they may be taught by trim; who sit under the ministry of Gospel preachers, that feed men with knowledge and understanding; who submit to Gospel ordinances, and keep the commandments of Christ; for such are said to have a good understanding; they show that they have, and by these means get and increase it; see (³¹¹⁰Psalm 111:10 119:104); and who also converse with knowing and experienced Christians; for “he that walketh with wise men shall be wise”, (³¹³⁰Proverbs 13:20).

Ver. 7. *He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame*, etc.]

Intimating, that though the simple, and such as want understanding, and of whom there is hope of doing them good, are to be invited into Wisdom’s house; yet not the haughty scorner, the abandoned sinner, the scoffer at all religion, who walks after his own lusts, and is quite irreclaimable; it is but casting pearls before swine, and giving that which is holy to dogs, to reprove and exhort such persons; though the Gospel is to be preached to every creature, yet when men despise it, and make a mock at it, they are to be turned from, and no more is to be said to them; as the Jews of old, they were the first invited to the Gospel feast, the same that is described in the context; they made light of it, contradicted and blasphemed the word, and so judged themselves unworthy of it; wherefore Wisdom’s maidens, or Christ’s ministers, were bid to turn from them, and go to the Gentiles, and preach it to them; for it is to no purpose to address such persons; “shame” is the sure consequence of it, because a man is disappointed of the end he has in view, which is doing good;

and he that rebuketh a wicked [man getteth] himself a blot; this shows who is meant by a scorner, a very profligate man, bent on his wicked ways, and quite incorrigible; to rebuke such an one is not only labour lost, and in vain, but the rebuker getteth himself an ill name, and is sure to have the dirt of reproach and scandal cast upon him; though this a man might patiently bear, if there was any hope of doing good.

Ver. 8. *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee*, etc.] For wicked men are apt to hate those that publicly rebuke them, (³¹⁵⁰Amos 5:10). Hence minister’s of the word are of all men most hated; though this also should be bore with, could it be thought, or there was any reason to believe, that the reproof would be of any service. The scorner here, and in the preceding verses, may not only design profane sinners, sensualists, and atheists, that despise all religion, and scoff at all that is good; but also proud scornful

Pharisees, such who derided Christ himself, and trusted in themselves, and despised others, Christ and his apostles, and their ministrations, (~~<DIG4>~~Luke 16:14 18:9); and such, as Christ came not to call them himself, so he bid his disciples let them alone, (~~<DIG3>~~Matthew 9:13 15:14);

rebuke a wise [man], and he will love thee; as David did Nathan; and who was determined to take kindly the reproof of any righteous man, (~~<DIG5>~~Psalm 141:5). Such who are spiritually wise will be thankful for the reproof of Gospel ministers, and even of private Christians, and will love and esteem them for their faithfulness and uprightness, and for the good which they themselves receive hereby.

Ver. 9. *Give [instruction] to a wise [man]*, etc.] In the Hebrew text it is only “give to a wise man”; give him reproof, correction, chastisement, doctrine, or instruction, be it what it will, he will be the better for it. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, “give occasion”; to him of showing his wisdom and of improving in it:

and he will be yet wiser; he will learn something by every him that is given him, whether it be by way of rebuke, or by way of instruction;

teach a just [man]; one that is truly so, that has seen the insufficiency of his own righteousness, and has renounced that, and does not trust in it; and who has learned Christ, as the Lord his righteousness; has seen the glory, fulness, and suitableness of his righteousness, and trusts unto it and depends upon it; and in consequence of this lives soberly, righteously, and godly; teach such a man the doctrines of the Gospel, and every lesson of obedience and duty,

and he will increase in learning; he will grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ and all divine things; (see ~~<DIG2>~~Matthew 13:12).

Ver. 10. *The fear of the Lord [is] the beginning of wisdom*, etc.] This shows who the wise men are, and in what true wisdom lies; no man is wise till he fears the Lord, and he that does so is a wise man, at least then he begins to be one; this is the principal part of wisdom, (~~<DIG7>~~Proverbs 1:7); and is at the first of it; it is the beginning of grace; it is the first act of wisdom, or grace; or which appears as soon as a man is converted and caused to know wisdom in the hidden part; as repentance, faith, and love, quickly show themselves in one act or another, so does the fear of God; for the former are never without the latter; for fear is an awe and reverence of the divine Being, joined with love to him, trust in him, and a desire to serve

and worship him in a right manner; no sooner is a man converted, but presently there is in him a fear of offending God, from a principle of love to him; for not a slavish but a filial fear is here intended;

and the knowledge of the Holy [is] understanding: either the knowledge of the Holy Ones, as the three divine Persons in the Godhead, who are so called, (^{GEN}Joshua 24:19 ^{PROV}Proverbs 30:3 ^{HOS}Hosea 11:9); the knowledge of God the Father, who is holy in his nature and works; not a mere natural knowledge of him by the light of nature; nor a mere notional knowledge of him by revelation; not a legal knowledge of him as a lawgiver, and an offended Judge; but an evangelical knowledge of him in Christ, as his God and Father; and as the God of all grace in him; so as to have faith and hope in him, access unto him, and communion with him; this is right understanding: so the knowledge of Christ, God's Holy One; a knowledge of him in his person, offices, and grace; an inward knowledge of him, a spiritual acquaintance with him, so as to approve of him, believe in him, and appropriate him to one's self; this is to attain to a good degree of understanding: as likewise the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, the author of sanctification; of his person, and operations of grace; as a convincer and comforter; as a Spirit of illumination and faith, of regeneration and sanctification; and as the Spirit of adoption, and the earnest of glory; this is another branch of spiritual understanding. Moreover, such knowledge which holy men have, and which makes them so; and which holy men of God, moved by the Holy Ghost, have communicated in the sacred Scriptures, of which they are the penmen. The knowledge of holy things may also be meant; of the holy mysteries of religion, of the holy doctrines of the Gospel, which are all according to godliness, and teach men to live in a holy manner: the faith once delivered to the saints is a most holy faith, encourages and promotes holiness of heart and life; as the doctrines of God's everlasting love; eternal election; the unconditionality of the covenant of grace; redemption by Christ; conversion by efficacious grace; justification by Christ's righteousness; pardon by his blood; satisfaction by his sacrifice; and perseverance by his power: and now a knowledge of these things, not notional, but experimental, is understanding indeed; as well as a knowledge of holy and gracious experiences.

Ver. 11. *For by me thy days shall be multiplied*, etc.] These are the words of Wisdom, and contain a reason and argument why her call and advice in the preceding verses should be listened unto, since she gives long life to her followers. She is a tree of life unto them, the author and giver of spiritual

and eternal life; by means of her bread and her wine spiritual life is maintained, promoted, and preserved; and length of days, for ever and ever, is the gift of her right hand; see (^{<3190>}Proverbs 3:16,18). The Targum is,

“for by it thy days shall be multiplied;”

which seems to refer it to the fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom, in (^{<3190>}Proverbs 9:10), to which long life is attributed; see (^{<3197>}Proverbs 10:27);

and the years of thy life shall be increased; or, “they shall add years of life to thee”^{f255}; wisdom and understanding, the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of the Holy; if not in this world, yet in the world to come, which will be without end.

Ver. 12. *If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself*, etc.] He is wise that harkens to Wisdom’s advice, that obeys her call, turns in to her house, and becomes her guest; and such an one is wise for himself, it is for his own good, profit, and advantage; for the good of his soul, for his present peace and comfort, and for his future bliss and happiness. It is not for her own sake that Wisdom presses her exhortations, and is so urgent on men to take her counsel and advice; it is for their own good; their wisdom is not profitable to her, but to themselves; they, and they only, reap the advantage and usefulness of it; (see ^{<3212>}Job 22:2,3). The Syriac and Arabic versions add, “and unto thy friends”; and the Septuagint version is, “if thou becomest wise to thyself, thou wilt be wise to neighbours”; they will receive some profit by it;

but [if] thou scornest, thou alone shall bear [it]; the evil, as the Vulgate Latin; the sin of scorning, and the punishment due unto it; it will bring no real hurt to Wisdom, or Christ, nor to his ministers, nor to his Gospel and ordinances, scoffed at; all the hurt will redound to the scoffer himself; and he alone shall bear it, and feel the smart of it, and all the dreadful consequences following upon it. The Septuagint version here adds the following clause,

“he that trusteth in lies, he feedeth on winds; the same pursues birds flying; for he forsakes the ways of his own vineyard; he wanders from the paths of his own husbandry; he passes through a desert without water, and a land destined to thirst, and he gathers unfruitfulness with his hands;”

and which are retained in the Syriac and Arabic version, but are not in the Hebrew text.

Ver. 13. *A foolish woman [is] clamorous*, etc.] Some by this woman understand folly itself, as opposed to wisdom; others blind reason, ignorant of divine things; others carnal sensual pleasure, which entices and draws men to that which is evil; others heresy and superstition; others the old serpent, the devil; she seems to be the same with the strange woman and harlot before described, (⁴¹²⁶Proverbs 2:16 5:3 7:5), etc. and being set in direct opposition to Wisdom, or Christ, seems to design antichrist, who is described in the book of the Revelation as the great whore; and all the characters here agree with the same. Antichrist is represented as a “woman”, (^{667B}Revelation 17:3,4,6,18); and is “foolish”; for whatever worldly cunning and craft, and wicked subtlety, there may be in the Romish antichrist, yet he is destitute of all spiritual wisdom and knowledge; and is “clamorous” and noisy, has a mouth speaking great swelling words of vanity and blasphemy, boasting of infallibility, works of supererogation, merits, miracles, wealth, and riches; and very pressing and importunate to gain proselytes to his religion; the priests and Jesuits are compared to noisy, clamorous, croaking frogs, (⁶⁶⁶³Revelation 16:13);

[she is] simple, and knoweth nothing; a woman of follies, extremely foolish and simple, and most grossly ignorant; knows nothing that is good, as the Targum; that is, spiritually good; knows not God aright; is without the fear and love of him, and faith in him; nor knows Christ, and the way of righteousness and life by him; nor the Spirit of God, and the operations of his grace upon the heart; nor the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; nor the ways, worship, and ordinances of God. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, “she knows not shame”; but is bold and impudent, having a whore’s forehead, and on it written, “Mystery, Babylon, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth”, (^{667B}Revelation 17:5).

Ver. 14. *For she sitteth at the door of her house*, &c.] Idle and inactive, looking out for her prey; not active and laborious, as Wisdom, building her house, killing her beasts, furnishing her table, and sending out her maidens to call in her guests; but exposing herself in the most public manner, and being at the utmost ease, sitting as a queen; (see ⁶⁶⁸⁷Revelation 18:7); and as it follows,

on a seat, or “throne”,^{f256}; the same seat, or throne, power, and authority, which the dragon gave to the beast, or antichrist, placed at Rome, where this woman reigns; (see ^{<612>}Revelation 13:2 17:8);

in the high places of the city; the city of Rome, and its jurisdiction, the high places of which are their temples, or churches; where this foolish woman is noisy and clamorous, proclaims her folly, and endeavours to seduce and raw persons to her superstition and idolatry. “Merome”, the word for “high places”, has some affinity with Rome, and comes from the same root^{f257}.

Ver. 15. *To call passengers who go right on their ways.*] Who have been religiously educated, and trained up in the principles of true Christianity; and who walk outwardly according to the rule of the divine word, and are in a fair way for heaven and eternal happiness. These she has her eye upon as they pass along, and calls unto them, and endeavours to turn them aside out of the way they are going, to make them proselytes to her antichristian religion; which, when she succeeds in, she glories and boasts of; just as harlots are very desirous of seducing and debauching chaste, innocent, and virtuous persons; see (^{<612>}Revelation 2:20). Saying as follows:

Ver. 16. *Whoso [is] simple, let him turn in hither*, etc.] The harlot’s house, Popish chapels and churches. She uses the same form of words that Wisdom does, (^{<300>}Proverbs 9:4); having a form of godliness, a show of religion, but without the power of it; her priests are wolves in sheep’s clothing, and speak lies in hypocrisy: and such that she fixes upon as proper persons to work on are the simple, the credulous and unwary; who are not on their guard, and are easily persuaded and imposed on;

and [as for] him that wanteth understanding; is not well grounded in the principles of Christianity he professes; has not a spiritual and experimental understanding of them:

she saith to him; addresses him in such language as follows:

Ver. 17. *Stolen waters are sweet*, etc.] Wells and fountains of waters in those hot countries were very valuable, and were the property of particular persons; about which there were sometimes great strife and contention; and they were sometimes sealed and kept from the use of others; (see ^{<123>}Genesis 26:18-22 ^{<2012>}Song of Solomon 4:12); now waters got by stealth from such wells and fountains were sweeter than their own, or what might be had in common and without difficulty, to which the proverb

alludes. By which in general is meant, that all prohibited unlawful lusts and pleasures are desirable to men, and sweet in the enjoyment of them; and the pleasure promised by them is what makes them so desirable, and the more so because forbidden: and particularly as adultery, which is a sort of theft^{f258}, and a drinking water out of another's cistern, (²⁰¹⁵Proverbs 5:15); being forbidden and unlawful, and secretly committed, is sweeter to an unclean person than a lawful enjoyment of his own wife; so false worship, superstition, and idolatry, the inventions of men, and obedience to their commands, which are no other than spiritual adultery, are more grateful and pleasing to a corrupt mind than the true and pure worship of God;

and bread [eaten] in secret is pleasant; or, “bread of secret places”^{f259}; hidden bread, as the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; that which is stolen and is another's^{f260}, and is taken and hid in secret places, fetched out from thence, or eaten there: the sweet morsel of sin, rolled in the mouth, and kept under the tongue; secret lusts, private sins, particularly idolatry, to which men are secretly enticed, and which they privately commit, (⁴⁵³⁶Deuteronomy 13:6); the same thing is designed by this clause as the forager.

Ver. 18. *But he knoweth not that the dead [are] there*, etc.] In the house of this foolish and wicked woman, into which she invites passengers to turn; the simple, that is persuaded by her, does not consider that there are none there to be his companions, but such who are dead in a moral or spiritual sense; that, though they live in pleasure, they are dead while they live. Aben Ezra refers this to “hell” in the next clause; where her guests are, and where those that are slain by her have their everlasting abode; and where the giants are, as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; or the mighty ones she has cast down there, as the Targum; so the word “rephaim” sometimes signifies: and some think that reference is had to the giants of the old world, that corrupted their way on earth, and brought a deluge on it; (see ³⁰²⁶Proverbs 7:26);

[and that] her guests [are] in the depths of hell; not only in the way to it, and on the brink of it, but in the very midst of it: there are many in hell she has invited into her house, and persuaded to turn in there, and commit fornication with her; and all that worship the beast, or commit spiritual adultery with the whore of Rome, will go down to perdition with her, and have their portion in hell fire, in the lake which burns with fire and

brimstone; which they do not consider that are drawn into her idolatrous practices, (~~6649~~ Revelation 14:9-11).