

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION TO PROVERBS 10

From this chapter to the “twenty fifth” are various proverbial sentences, without any very apparent connection or coherence with each other; describing righteous and wicked men; setting forth their different temper, conduct, and actions, and the fruits and effects of them. It should be observed, that frequently in the preceding chapters two persons are represented as women; one goes by the name of “Wisdom”, the other is called the “foolish” woman and a “harlot”; the former is clearly to be understood of Christ; and the latter, being opposed to him, must be antichrist, the whore of Rome, and mother of harlots: now in the following part of this book two sorts of persons are spoken of; the one as wise, righteous, good, etc. and the other as foolish, wicked, etc. who are no other than the followers of Christ and antichrist; which observation is a key to the whole book.

Ver. 1. *The proverbs of Solomon*, etc.] This title is repeated from (~~2000~~ Proverbs 1:1); and very properly stands here; since here begin those pithy sentences of Solomon, which bear the name of proverbs; the preceding chapters being a sort of preface or introduction to them; in which Solomon recommends the study of wisdom, shows the profit and advantage of it, gives directions about it, and prepares for the reception of those wise sayings that follow; which are for the most part independent of each other, and consist generally of clauses set in a contrast to one another, and often expressed by similes and metaphors;

a wise son maketh a glad father; as Solomon made glad his father David: for no doubt there were appearances of his wisdom before he came to the throne, though greater afterwards; which made David rejoice that he was placed on the throne before his death, to whom he had committed the charge of building the house of the Lord;

but a foolish son [is] the heaviness of his mother; brings grief and trouble to her, as perhaps Rehoboam did to his mother: though all this is to be understood conjunctly of both parents, and not separately of each; not as if

a wise son only was matter of joy to his father, who may be thought to be a better judge of his wisdom, and more abroad to hear the fame of it, and to observe the effects of it; or as if a foolish son only caused grief to his mother, because more at home, and more privy to his foolish behaviour; but as being equally joyous or afflicting to both parents. Nor is this to be understood of such who are wise and foolish as to their natural capacities only; but who are so in a moral sense, either virtuous or vicious, good or wicked. Wherefore parents should be concerned for the education of their children, whose behaviour much depends upon it; and children for their conduct towards their parents and in the world, since their joy and grief are influenced by it. Some interpret the words mystically, the “father”, of God; the “mother”, of the church; and, the “sons”, of the children of them both: and so may fitly describe the different followers of Christ and antichrist; the one being wise, the other foolish; the one acceptable to God, the other not.

Ver. 2. *Treasures of wickedness profit nothing*, etc.] By which are meant either a large abundance of riches in general, which for the most part are enjoyed by wicked men, and abused to wicked purposes, (^{<3104>}Proverbs 11:4); or an affluence of them, obtained in a wicked way, by fraud, oppression, and the like; (see ^{<3160>}Micah 6:10); Or are either not used at all, or put to wicked uses: what are not used profit not the possessors of them, for they are “kept to the hurt of the owners” of them; and those which are got by ill means, or put to an ill use, “perish by evil travel”, (^{<2153>}Ecclesiastes 5:13,14). Nor can any by his riches either redeem himself or his brother from destruction, or give to God a ransom for him; nor can he by them save himself from a corporeal death one year, one month, one day, one hour, one moment; nor will they be of any service to him in the day of judgment, when wrath comes forth against him;

but righteousness delivereth from death; either that which is righteously got, though it be ever so little, is a means of preserving life, and keeps their souls from famishing, (^{<2103>}Proverbs 10:3); or else what is liberally dispensed, for alms are called “righteousness”, (^{<1333>}Psalms 112:9) (^{<2107>}Daniel 4:27 ^{<1101>}Matthew 6:1 ^{<4710>}2 Corinthians 9:10). These are oftentimes the means of saving the lives of persons ready to perish, on whom they are bestowed, and who will venture their lives to save their benefactors; and such liberal persons are oftentimes blessed with long life, and are kept alive when threatened with death, (^{<1401>}Psalms 41:1-3); and though their good deeds are not meritorious of eternal life, yet they are rewarded with it in a way of grace, (^{<4254>}Matthew 25:34-38). Moreover,

righteousness may be considered as legal and evangelical; a legal righteousness, or the righteousness of men in obedience to the law, cannot deliver from the sentence of death the law has passed; it is not properly a righteousness; it is imperfect, cannot justify, save, or bring to heaven, or entitle to life; notwithstanding this a man must die: but there is an evangelical righteousness; and this is either imparted and implanted in men, is the new man, which is created in righteousness and holiness; and this delivers from a moral or spiritual death, a death in trespasses and sins men are in; for by it they are quickened, live a life of faith on Christ, and have communion with God; have his image stamped on them, and live to him, and to Christ, and to righteousness, being freed from the servitude and dominion of sin; living in which is no other than death: or this righteousness is imputed, which is the righteousness of Christ; wrought out for them, reckoned to them, received by them, and by which they are justified; this delivers them, though not from a corporeal death, yet from the sting and curse of it, and from it as a penal evil, or as a punishment for sin: and it delivers from a legal death, or from the sentence and condemnation of the law, and from the second and eternal death, and entitles them to life everlasting.

Ver. 3. *The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish,* etc.] Or to perish by famine: not but that good men may be afflicted with it, as Jacob and his sons were, when the famine was in Egypt and in other lands; and as the apostles, particularly the Apostle Paul, were often in hunger and thirst, yet not so as to be destroyed by it; for in “famine” the Lord redeems such from death; though the young lions lack and suffer hunger, they that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing; at least whatever they may suffer this way does not arise from the wrath of God, nor does it nor can it separate from the love of God and Christ, (~~881~~ Job 5:20 ~~8918~~ Psalm 34:8,9 ~~8185~~ Romans 8:35). Moreover, the souls of such shall not be famished for want of spiritual food; shall not have a famine of the word and ordinances; their souls shall be fed, as with marrow and fatness, with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock: the church, though in the wilderness, is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, (~~6124~~ Revelation 12:14);

but he casteth away the substance of the wicked; that which is got in a wicked way; as sometimes he causes it to diminish by little and little; at other times he forcibly and suddenly drives it away, and causes it to take wings and fly away; though it has been swallowed down with great

greediness and in great abundance, he makes them throw it up again, and casts it out of their belly, whether they will or not, so that it does not profit them, (^{<8015>}Job 20:15).

Ver. 4. *He becometh poor that dealeth [with] a slack hand*, etc.] That is either remiss in giving to the necessities of others, according to his abilities, and as cases require; or that is negligent and slothful in his business. Or, “that worketh with a deceitful hand”; or, “with a hand of deceit”^{f261}, as it may be rendered; who pretends to work, but does not; makes a show as if he did, but acts deceitfully; or who uses many tricking and deceitful ways and methods to live, as usually slothful persons do. Aben Ezra observes, it may be rendered and interpreted, “he becomes poor that makes a deceitful balance”; thinking to enrich himself by such fraudulent practices: or, as others, “a deceitful balance maketh poor”^{f262}; such seldom or ever thrive, or it does not long prosper with them who use such unlawful methods;

but the hand of the diligent maketh rich; that is, with the blessing of God along with it, as in (^{<1002>}Proverbs 10:22); such who are “sharp”^{f263} and acute, as the word signifies; who are careful and industrious, mind their business, and do the honest part; these, with a divine blessing, frequently grow rich: or rather who are like those that dig in the earth for gold, who search for it with great eagerness and diligence; for from this root is a word often used for gold, (^{<1014>}Proverbs 3:14 8:19 16:16). All this is true in a spiritual sense; such who are slothful in attendance on the means of grace, the word and ordinances, are slack and negligent in duty, bring a spiritual poverty upon them; and like the Laodicean church, who, through her lukewarmness and carnal security, became poor and wretched, blind and naked: on the other hand, such who are diligent in the use of means are frequent at the throne of grace, forsake not the assembly of the saints, constantly wait at Wisdom’s gates; these grow rich in grace and in all good works.

Ver. 5. *He that gathereth in summer [is] a wise son*, etc.] Which is the time of gathering the fruits of the earth, and laying them up against winter, as the ant is said to do, (^{<1018>}Proverbs 6:8);

[but] he that sleepeth in harvest [is] a son that causeth shame; to himself, and to his parents and relations. The sum of the proverb is, that, in the time of health and youth, persons should be active and industrious in their several callings and stations, and provide against a time of sickness and old

age; and that they should lose no opportunities, neither in a natural nor spiritual way, of doing or receiving good.

Ver. 6. *Blessings [are] upon the head of the just*, etc.] That seeks for righteousness, not by the works of the law, but by faith; that lives by faith upon the righteousness of Christ, and is justified by it, made, accounted, and reckoned just through it; and, in consequence of his faith, does justly, and lives soberly, righteously, and godly: upon his “head”, who is Christ, blessings are; for he is “the head of every [such] man”, (~~410B~~ 1 Corinthians 11:3); not the pope of Rome, but Christ, is head of the church; he is the representative and federal head of all the elect, both in eternity and time; he is a political head to them, as a king is to his subjects; an economical one, as the husband is the head of the wife, a father the head of his family, and a master the head of his servants; and he is in such sense a head to them as a natural head is to its body; he is of the same nature with them, superior to them, a perfect, only, everliving, and everlasting head. Upon him all the blessings of grace and goodness are; his people are blessed with them in him, their head, (~~400B~~ Ephesians 1:3); and from him they descend to them, the members of his body, just as the oil on Aaron’s head ran down his beard to the skirts of his garments. So in an ancient writing of the Jews^{f264}, this passage being mentioned, it is asked, Who is the head of the righteous? The answer is, the middle pillar; by whom they seem to mean a middle person, the Mediator, the Messiah. Or else, a part being put for the whole, the meaning is, that blessings are upon the persons of righteous ones, as the word is used in (~~400B~~ Proverbs 11:26 25:22); the Targum renders it, “the heads of the righteous.”

All covenant blessings, spiritual ones, such as are blessings indeed, solid and substantial, irreversible, and for ever; particularly a justifying righteousness, from whence they are denominated just; pardon of sin, peace of soul, every sanctifying grace, the blessing of adoption, and a right to eternal life: these being said to be on the “head” of them, may denote that they come from above, and descend in a way of grace upon them; that they are visible and manifest; that they reside, continue, and remain upon them; that they are as an ornament and crown unto them; and that they are a security of them that no wrath and vengeance can fall upon them. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions, read, “the blessing of the Lord [is] upon the head of the just”; and such are all the blessings before mentioned;

but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked; that is, either his violent dealings are open and manifest, and are a scandal to him, as well as entail a curse on him; or rather the fruit and effect of his violence and oppression, the punishment due thereunto, is so righteously inflicted on him, that his mouth is stopped, and he has not one word to say against the just judgments of God upon him, for his violent usage of men, whether here or hereafter; (see ^{<19472>}Psalm 107:42). Some render the words, “the mouth of the wicked covereth violence”^{f265}; palliates and excuses it, and calls it by another name; or hides and conceals that which is in the heart, and does not utter it; see (^{<20018>}Proverbs 10:18). The Targum is,

“in the mouth of the wicked rapine is covered;”

as a sweet morsel under their tongue, though in the end bitterness.

Ver. 7. *The memory of the just [is] blessed*, etc.] Men to whom he has been useful, either in temporals or spirituals, bless him, or wish all blessings to him while alive, whenever they make mention of his name; and after death they speak well of him, and pronounce him blessed; for such are had in everlasting remembrance; the memory of them is sweet and precious; their name is famous and valuable, and always spoken of with honour and commendation; (see ^{<19816>}Psalm 112:6). The Jewish writers take it for a command, and render it, “let the memory of the just be blessed”; and say, that he that transgresses it breaks an affirmative precept; they make an abbreviation of the word by the initial letters, and join them to the names of their celebrated men;

but the name of the wicked shall rot; shall be forgotten, be buried in oblivion, and never mentioned: and though they may call their houses, lands, and cities, by their own names, in order to transmit their memory to posterity; yet these, by one means or another, are destroyed, and their memorials perish with them; (see ^{<20810>}Ecclesiastes 8:10 ^{<19411>}Psalm 49:11 9:6); and if their names are mentioned after they are gone, it is with detestation and abhorrence, as things putrefied are abhorred; so they leave an ill savour behind them, when the good name of the righteous is as precious ointment, (^{<20016>}Ecclesiastes 7:1). It is a saying of Cicero^{f266}, that

“the life of the dead lies in the memory of the living.”

Ver. 8. *The wise in heart will receive commandments*, etc.] Such who have true wisdom in the hidden part of the heart, of which the fear of the Lord is the beginning: these will not only, as good subjects, honour their king, and

attend to his lawful commands; and, as dutiful children, regard those of their parents; and, as faithful servants, hearken to those of their masters; but, as such that fear the Lord, will receive and cheerfully obey the commandments of God and Christ;

but a prating fool shall fall; like Diotrefes, that prated against the Apostle John and other saints. Or, “a fool of lips”^{f267}; whose folly is proclaimed and made known by his lips; who, out of the abundance of it in his heart, speaks and pours it out by his lips: such an one falls into sin and into mischief; he falls into disgrace in this world, and into hell in the next. The Targum is,

“the fool by his lips shall be taken;”

as in a snare.

Ver. 9. *He that walketh uprightly walketh surely*, etc.] Or, “that walketh in perfection”^{f268} as the Targum. Not that walks without sin, no man does that; but that walks in the sincerity, integrity, and uprightness of his heart, both before God and men; who worships God in spirit and in truth, and speaks the truth in his heart to his neighbour; who is an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile; who walks uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel; who makes the word of God the rule of his life and actions; who walks by faith on Christ, using him as the way to the Father; believing in him for salvation; walking on in him as he has received him, and especially dealing with his uprightness or righteousness for his justification before God; who walks, as Christ did, in imitation of him; who walks in love, as he did, and in all humility, meekness, patience, and self-denial; who walks in and after the Spirit of Christ; and in the truths of the Gospel, and in all the ordinances thereof; and in all holy conversation and godliness, studying to exercise a conscience void of offence towards God and men. Such a man “walks surely”, or securely, safely, confidently, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, interpret the word. Such an one has nothing to fear in his walk; he walks on “terra firma”, on good ground, in a good way, which leads to life eternal: he has a good guide, the Spirit of God, which goes before him, and will be his guide even unto death, and lead him in the way everlasting, unto the land of uprightness; he has a good guard about him, not only the angels of God that encamp around him, but God himself is a wall of fire to him, and his power surrounds and protects him; he has many precious promises to support him; not only that the Lord will be a buckler to him, but will withhold no

good thing from him, (^{<3017>}Proverbs 2:7 ^{<3841>}Psalm 84:11); he has the gracious and supporting presence of God, when he passes through the fire and water of afflictions, and even through the valley of the shadow of death, so that he has nothing to fear; and has moreover the testimony of a good conscience; and having a good hope through grace, he “walks in hope”, as the Targum is; yea, rejoices in hope of the glory of God, and holds fast that rejoicing to the end;

but he that perverteth his ways shall be known; who does not walk in a plain, direct, and even path, according to the rule of the word, as the upright man; but winds about here and there, goes into crooked paths, walks in craftiness as deceitful workers, whose folly shall be made manifest; though they think to hide it, and deceive men, they and their wickedness shall be exposed, their tricks and artful methods shall be laid open, and they be known to be what they are; if not in this life, yet at the last judgment, (^{<5424>}1 Timothy 5:24 ^{<5922>}2 Timothy 3:9). Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe another sense of the word, “he shall be broken”, and compare with it (^{<0716>}Judges 8:16 ^{<2513>}Isaiah 53:3).

Ver. 10. *He that winketh with the eye*, etc.] The Syriac and Arabic versions add, “with fraud”. A descriptive character of a wicked man, (^{<3013>}Proverbs 6:13); who so does, either to draw and allure persons to go along with him, and join him in his evil practices; or by way of scorn and contempt of others; or as a token to another of its being the proper time to circumvent his neighbour, or do him an injury. Such an one

causeth sorrow; to himself in the issue, however he may for the present please himself with his evil doings; and to others, whom he allures and deceives. The Arabic version is, “heaps afflictions” or “sorrows on men”; whom he corrupts and draws into his evil company and conversation;

but a prating fool shall fall; or, “be taken”, as the Targum; or “beaten”, as the Vulgate Latin; (see Gill on “^{<3008>}Proverbs 10:8”).

Ver. 11. *The mouth of a righteous [man is] a well of life*, etc.] Like a fountain of living water, continually running and flowing with water, wholesome, reviving, and refreshing; so the righteous man’s mouth, out of the abundance of his heart, overflows with good things, which minister grace to the hearers, and are for the use of edifying; things that are pleasant and profitable, grateful and acceptable, comforting, refreshing, and

pleasing, and which tend to the good of the life that now is, and that which is to come;

but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked; so that nothing comes out of it but what is pernicious and hurtful; what savours of rapine and violence; nothing but lying and deceit, cursing and swearing, and such like filthy and corrupt communication; (see Gill on “~~3006~~ Proverbs 10:6”). The Targum is, “the mouth of the ungodly covers injury”; which is meditated in the heart; so the Vulgate Latin version.

Ver. 12. *Hatred stirreth up strifes*, etc.] A man, whose heart is full of hatred and malice against his neighbour, will stir up, or awake, as the word ^{f269} signifies, contentions and quarrels which were happily laid asleep; these he renews by tale bearing, and whisperings, and evil surmises; by raising lies, spreading false reports and calumnies, and by virulent reproaches and slanders;

but love covereth all sins; not its own, but others; in imitation of the pardoning love and grace of God, which covers all the sins of his people with the blood and righteousness of his Son. Love spreads its mantle over the sins of its fellow creatures and Christians, and forgives them, even all of them: instead of exposing them, hides and conceals them; and, instead of loading and aggravating the infirmities of others, puts the best constructions on them, hopes and bears, and believes all things, (~~4337~~ 1 Corinthians 13:7); (see ~~4048~~ 1 Peter 4:8); where the apostle seems to have respect to this passage. This is not to be understood as conniving at or suffering sin upon others, or as contrary to Christian reproofs and rebukes for it.

Ver. 13. *In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found*, etc.] He that has an understanding, especially of divine, spiritual, and evangelic things, which is the pure gift of God; wisdom will be found in his lips, his mouth will speak of it; not of mere natural wisdom, but spiritual wisdom; of the wisdom of God in his works; of Christ, the Wisdom of God; of the Gospel, the hidden wisdom; of inward experience of the grace of God, wisdom in the inward part, (~~4873~~ Psalm 37:30); from his lips will drop wise sayings, very instructive and informing; which those that seek for and observe may find to their profit and advantage, and to the great credit and honour of the understanding man; while the foolish man gets both stripes and disgrace, as follows;

but a rod [is] for the back of him that is void of understanding; or, “wants a heart”^{f270}: that has no understanding of spiritual things in his heart, and so utters nothing but what is foolish and wicked, and, sooner or later, is chastised for it. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read this clause in connection with the former, thus; “he that brings forth wisdom out of his lips smites with a rod him that is void of understanding”.

Ver. 14. *Wise [men] lay up knowledge*, etc.] Which they get by reading, prayer, meditation, hearing the word of God, and conversation with good men: this they lay up in their hearts, minds, and memories, that they may not forget it, and as a rich treasure they highly value it; that they may bring it forth at proper times, and on proper occasions, for the benefit of others; (see ⁴¹²⁵Matthew 12:35 13:52); or hide^{f271} it; conceal it; do not boast and brag of it, as foolish men do;

but the mouth of the foolish [is] near destruction: who rashly and unguardedly utters things which bring swift and sudden destruction on himself and others; or terror and consternation, as the word^{f272} also signifies. The Vulgate Latin version is, “but the mouth of the foolish is near to confusion”; he boasts of his knowledge, betrays his ignorance, and so brings himself to shame and confusion.

Ver. 15. *The rich man’s wealth [is] his strong city*, etc.] What a fortified city is to persons in time of war, that is a rich man’s wealth to him; by it he can defend himself from the injuries of others, and support himself and family in times of public calamity; for money is a defence, and answers all things, (²¹⁰⁷²Ecclesiastes 7:12 10:19). Or his wealth is so in his own apprehension and conceit; he puts his trust and confidence in it, and thinks himself safe and secure by it; when he is trusting to uncertain riches, which will fail him; these may fly away from him in life, and leave him exposed to distress and danger; and, however, will not secure him at death from the wrath of God and everlasting destruction. Or he is lifted up with his riches, is in high spirits, and despises others; thinking himself safe, as in a strong castle, and fears nothing, distresses, diseases, or death;

the destruction of the poor [is] their poverty: or their poverty is their consternation, as the word^{f273} signifies, it frightens them; they, knowing their circumstances, are afraid of everybody and of every thing; not being able to defend themselves against their enemies, or support themselves in times of public calamity, as war, famine, or pestilence.

Ver. 16. *The labour of the righteous [tendeth] to life*, etc.] To natural life, and the support of it; all that he labours for is to get a livelihood for himself and family; that is all he desires, nor does he seek great things for himself: or to spiritual life; so his spiritual exercises in praying, reading, and hearing the word, and waiting upon ordinances, have a tendency to promote and maintain a spiritual life in him: or to eternal life; not that the works of a righteous man (so the Targum, Septuagint, and Arabic versions, render it in the plural number) are meritorious of eternal life; for life and righteousness are not to be had by the works of men, but by the grace of God; yet, as the righteous man labours for the meat which endures to everlasting life, given by the Son of God, his labour may be said to tend to life eternal, (~~4167~~John 6:27);

the fruit of the wicked to sin; whatever he enjoys, whether got by labour; though the word seems purposely omitted, as some observe, to signify that is not intended; or whether left him as an inheritance; or whatever way acquired, lawfully or unlawfully; all his revenues and riches, the increase of his substance and fields, are all used to sinful purposes, to pride, luxury, and wantonness; and so tend to death, even death eternal, the just wages of sin.

Ver. 17. *He [is in] the way of life*, etc.] Of eternal life, which is truly, properly, and by way of eminency, “life”, (~~4167~~Matthew 19:17); and which is a life of glory; a life of perfection, of perfect holiness, knowledge, obedience, love, peace, and joy; a life free from all the inconveniences of the present life, animal or spiritual; a life of pleasure, and which will last for ever: the “way” to it is not by works of righteousness done by men, since by these the law is not fulfilled, nor justice satisfied; and therefore no justification of life by them, or what entitles to eternal life; it is sinful, dangerous, and a vain thing, to seek for eternal life in this way; Christ is the only true way to it; who, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, has opened the new and living way; and through his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, way is made for all that believe in him to enter into eternal life: and such are in the way to it who are in Christ, secretly in election, openly in the effectual calling; when they are made new creatures, are quickened by the Spirit and grace of Christ, and have that principle in them which is a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life; who have a sight of Christ, and come unto him by faith; who truly believe in him, with which eternal life is connected. Particularly he is in the way unto it

that keepeth instruction; the instruction in righteousness which the Scriptures give, especially the Gospel part of them; which is an instruction into the mind and will of God about man's salvation; into the grace of God, as displayed therein; into the person and offices of Christ, and salvation by him; into the doctrines of peace, pardon, righteousness, and life, through him. Now he to whom this instruction comes with power, and is the savour of life unto life; who receives it in the love of it; who "observes"^{f274} it, as the word here used signifies; takes notice of and follows its direction, pointing out Christ as the way of salvation, instructing to look to him and believe in him, and be saved; and who retains and holds fast such instruction, and abides by it; and finds the word of the Gospel, and eats it, and is nourished by it unto everlasting life; he is most assuredly in the way of it;

but he that refuseth reproof erreth; that is, from the way of life. He that rejects the counsel and advice, the admonitions and reproofs, given in the word of God, by the ministers of it; or by parents and masters, friends or relations, that wish him well; he wanders far off from the way that leads to life, and goes into the paths of sin, and consequently is in the way of death. Some render it, "causeth to err"^{f275}; either others, as Aben Ezra; or both himself and others, as Jarchi: and then it may be understood of him "that forsaketh reproof"^{f276}, as it may be rendered; that is, that declines giving reproof, when it lies in his way, and is his duty to do it. Aben Ezra reads this clause in connection with the former, as said of one and the same person,

"he is in the way of life that keepeth instruction, and forsakes or rejects the reproof of him that causeth to err."

Ver. 18. *He that hideth hatred [with] lying lips*, etc.] Or he whose "lying lips hide hatred", which is much the same; who pretends to be a friend, and outwardly behaves as one, but inwardly nourishes and cherishes hatred in his heart, which he covers and conceals, till he has a proper opportunity of showing it; as Absalom to Ammon, Joab to Amasa, the men of Anathoth to Jeremiah, and Judas to Christ; see (^{26:24-26} Proverbs 26:24-26). Or, "he that hideth hatred [is a man of] lying lips"^{f277}; he is a liar, as the person next described is a fool. And he that uttereth slander is a fool; that brings it out by wholesale, and hides it not; who openly defames his neighbour, and in the most public manner; and with a multitude of words detracts from his good name, credit, and reputation, and loads him with calumny and

reproach; such a man is a fool, a very wicked man: yea, not only the public slanderer, but the secret dissembler, who thinks himself a cunning man because he hides himself; each of these is a fool, the one as well as the other. Gersom thinks there is a comparison made between the dissembler and the slanderer; the one being a liar, and the other a fool; and that the former is more abominable and pernicious than the latter.

Ver. 19. *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin*, etc.] Where a great deal is said, without care and forethought, there will not only be many weak things uttered, but much falsehood, and at least many idle things, which cannot be excused from sin; not but that much and long speaking may be to great profit and advantage, when it is with care and judgment, and founded on close meditation and study. Or, “sin ceaseth not”^{f278}; along with a torrent of words is a flow of sin, which ceases not as long as that continues: it is a saying of the Jewish Rabbins,

“he that multiplies words brings on or brings unto sin;”

but he that refraineth his lips [is] wise; lays a restraint on his mouth, bridles his tongue; does not suffer his lips to utter anything rashly and inconsiderately; is sparing of his words and is careful of what he says, that it is true and proper to be spoken; and considers well the time when, place where, and persons to whom he speaks; and, all circumstances weighed, conducts accordingly: such a man is a wise, prudent, and understanding man; (see ^{<1072>}Proverbs 17:27,28).

Ver. 20. *The tongue of the just [is as] choice silver*, etc.] Which utters things precious, pure, pleasant, and profitable; things for worth and value as choice silver; the doctrines of the Gospel, the power of which he has felt upon his heart; the precious promises of it, which have been applied unto him; and the rich experience of grace he has been favoured with: things pure and incorrupt, like silver free from dross; as the doctrines of grace, fetched out of the mines of the sacred Scripture, free from the dross of error, without any human mixture; consistent and all of a piece, and which tend to purity of heart and life; things the reverse of a corrupt communication, nothing filthy and unclean; a pure language, the language of Canaan; the language of repentance, faith, and love, of prayer and thankfulness: things which are grateful and acceptable, are with grace, and minister grace to the hearers; things profitable and edifying; for the righteous man’s mouth speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment; and his lips feed many, as in (^{<1002>}Proverbs 10:21); (see ^{<1873>}Psalms 37:30);

the heart of the wicked [is] little worth; good for nothing, as the Vulgate Latin version. The righteous man's tongue is better than the wicked man's heart; there is no good thing in his heart naturally; all manner of evil is in it, and comes out of it; no sin can be named but what is in his heart; all that is in it is sinful; the thoughts of it, and the imagination of his thoughts, are only evil, and that continually; the affections are inordinate, and set on sinful lusts and pleasures; the mind and conscience are defiled with sin; the understanding is darkened with it, and the will is obstinate and perverse, and bent upon it: his heart is wicked, and exceedingly wicked; it is wickedness itself, very wickedness, desperately wicked, incurably so without the grace of God. Such therefore know not their hearts who say they have good hearts; and they are fools that trust in them: this shows the necessity of regeneration, and that powerful and efficacious grace is requisite to it.

Ver. 21. *The lips of the righteous feed many*, etc.] Not their bodies; words are but wind, and will not feed; it is not enough to say to the distressed, "be ye warmed and filled", and give nothing; unless this can be understood of obtaining food for others by their prayers, as Jarchi interprets it: but the souls of many; these the righteous feed, by communicating the spiritual knowledge and understanding of divine things they are partakers of; by setting before them the bread of life, the honey and milk of the Gospel, they have under their tongue; and by the good counsel and advice, comforts and admonitions, they give them; (see ²⁰¹⁵Jeremiah 3:15 ²⁰¹¹Song of Solomon 4:11);

but fools die for want of wisdom: not a corporeal death, which is common to men of every rank and quality; wise men die even as fools; but they continue under the power of a spiritual death, for want of enlightening and quickening grace, and so die an eternal death: not for want of natural wisdom, which they may have a greater share of than those who live spiritually and eternally; but for want of spiritual wisdom and knowledge; the knowledge of Christ, and the way of life and salvation by him, and the knowledge of God in Christ; and not always for the want of the means of such wisdom and knowledge; as the Scriptures, which are able to make a man wise unto salvation; and the Gospel, which is the wisdom of God in a mystery; but through the neglect and contempt of them: though sometimes men perish through want of the means of knowledge, and the neglect of those who should instruct them, (²⁰¹⁶Hosea 4:6).

Ver. 22. *The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich*, etc.] In the diligent use of means; (see ^{<100>}Proverbs 10:4); riches are from the Lord, and should be acknowledged as such, and not attributed to the industry, diligence, sagacity, and merit of men; but should be looked upon as had through the blessing of the Lord upon the labours of men; and when they come this way they come as a blessing, and with one: it may be understood of being made rich in a spiritual sense; it is the blessing, good will, and favour of God, that makes men rich in Christ; that bestows upon them his unsearchable riches; that enriches them with all spiritual blessings in him; that makes them rich in faith and in good works, and with the riches of grace and of glory;

and he addeth no sorrow with it; no sorrow goes along with the blessing, but what is a blessing itself, as one observes; riches enjoyed through the blessing of God are not attended with that sorrow in getting, keeping, and losing them, as the riches of wicked men unlawfully gotten are; (see ^{<100>}1 Timothy 6:9,10); for as the good man comes by them easily, without any anxious care and sinful solicitude, he seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things are added to him, over and above, without much thought about them, or expectation of them, (^{<100>}Matthew 6:33); so it is with great delight, pleasure, and cheerfulness, he enjoys them, and readily communicates them to others; while the wicked man is full of anxiety, distress, and sorrow; see (^{<100>}Ecclesiastes 5:12,13,18 6:2). This is eminently true of spiritual riches; there is no sorrow attending them; the fruit and effect of them are peace, joy, and comfort.

Ver. 23. *[It is] as sport to a fool to do mischief*, etc.] To do any injury to the persons and properties of men; which shows a most wicked and malicious spirit, a very depraved nature indeed: or rather “to commit sin”^{f279} of any sort, which he has devised in his own heart; it is as a “laughing”^{f280}, as the words may be rendered; it is a laughing matter to him, he commits sin, and, when he has done it, laughs at it; instead of being ashamed of it, and humbled for it, he makes a mock at it, and a jest of it, as well as of all religion, and of the reproofs and admonitions of good men. Sin is pastime, he takes as much delight and pleasure in it as men do in their sports, and commits it as openly and freely; yea, not only takes pleasure in doing it himself, but in them that do it; (see ^{<100>}Proverbs 14:9 ^{<100>}Romans 1:30);

but a man of understanding hath wisdom; to avoid sin, and not to do it, which is true wisdom, (^{<4338>}Job 28:28); for he has, as it may be rendered, from the use of the word in the Arabic language^{f281}, a “bridle” or “restraint” upon him, that he cannot do mischief and delight in it, as the fool does: or “so [is] wisdom to a man of understanding”^{f282}; that is, to do it; as it is a pleasure to a feel to commit sin, so it is a delight to an understanding man to do that which is wise and good; it is “meat and drink” to do the will of God, (see ^{<4046>}John 4:34); he takes as much pleasure in it as men can do in their sports and pastimes; he has a truer pleasure and a better relish than they have; he delights in the law of God after the inward man; and Wisdom’s ways, or the ways of Christ, are pleasantness to him; he runs the ways of his commandments with great alacrity and cheerfulness.

Ver. 24. *The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him*, etc.] What he dreads in his own mind will be his unhappy case, sooner or later it comes upon him; his fear of distresses, calamities, and judgments in this life, and of eternal wrath and vengeance hereafter; for the most profligate and abandoned wretches, the greatest atheists, who endeavour to work themselves up to a disbelief of a God and a future state, have at times their frights and fears about these things; and as are their fears of God, so will his wrath be, (^{<4901>}Psalms 90:11). Jarchi illustrates this in the instance of the builders of Babel, who were afraid of being scattered upon the face of the earth, which thing feared came upon them through and for their building of the tower; and so it sometimes is, that the very thing which men fear comes upon them by the means which they take to prevent it; so the Jews were afraid that if their people believed in Jesus of Nazareth, the Romans would come and seize their city and nation, and therefore endeavoured to persuade them to reject him; for which rejection of him the thing they feared came upon them;

but the desire of the righteous shall be granted; or “he shall give”^{f283}; that is, God shall give it; who has it in his hands or power to give it, as Jarchi’s note is: what a righteous man desires from right principles, and with right views; what is for his own good and the glory of God; what he asks in faith, and with submission to the divine will, and is according to it, is sooner or later, in God’s own time and way, granted unto him: particularly his desires after righteousness; after the righteousness of Christ, and to be found alone in that, living and dying; after holiness of heart and life, that he might be cleansed and kept from sin, and preserved to the coming of

Christ; after more grace, an increase of it, and fresh supplies from Christ; after more communion with God and Christ, and conformity to them; after glory and happiness, and a being with them to all eternity. Some understand this of the righteous man's desire upon the wicked; that his fear might come upon him, and the glory of divine justice appear in his swift and sudden destruction; as expressed in (^{<30025>}Proverbs 10:25); so Aben Ezra.

Ver. 25. *As the whirlwind passeth, so [is] the wicked no [more]*, etc.] The wicked themselves are like a whirlwind, noisy, boisterous, and blustering; such is the man of sin, who speaks like a dragon, breathing out slaughter and threatening against the saints; and so are his followers, fierce and heady, and like a whirlwind, pernicious and destructive, bearing down, carrying away, and destroying all before it; so the locusts of the bottomless pit, under their king Abaddon, or Apollyon, the destroyer; and all tyrannical persecutors, who are as the boar out of the forest, and the wild beast of the field: and these "pass away" like a whirlwind, swiftly, suddenly, and at once; now they are seen in great power and authority, and anon they are not any more, (^{<30413>}Jeremiah 4:13 ^{<30575>}Psalm 37:35,36); as the whirlwind, which digs up the earth, makes a circle and buries itself in it; so the wicked dig a pit for others and fall into it themselves, (^{<30074>}Psalm 7:14,16 9:15,16); and as a whirlwind passes away to the joy of men, so when the wicked perish there is shouting; as will be at the destruction of antichrist more especially, (^{<30110>}Proverbs 11:10 ^{<30601>}Revelation 19:1); and it is in the whirlwind and storm of divine wrath, which falls upon the head of the wicked, by which they are caused to pass away, (^{<30239>}Jeremiah 23:19 ^{<30271>}Job 27:20-23); so that they are "not": not that they are annihilated at death, they will rise again and come to judgment, and live in torment for ever; when they pass away, they are somewhere; they are "not" indeed in the land of the living, in their own houses, as formerly, which will know them no more; they are not in their grandeur and prosperity, enjoying their riches and honour; but they are in their own place, in hell they lift up their eyes, though they wish they had no being;

but the righteous [is] an everlasting foundation; he is in a firm and stable state here and hereafter; interested in everlasting love; in which he is rooted and grounded; secured in an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; having a share in everlasting salvation, and eternal redemption wrought out by Christ; being justified by his everlasting righteousness, which will answer for him in a time to come; and a partaker of those graces

of the Spirit, faith, hope, and love, which are a well of living water springing up to everlasting life; and having everlasting strength and everlasting consolation in Christ, and a title to eternal life through him. Or, “but the righteous [has] an everlasting foundation”^{f284}; the sense is the same; which foundation is not external privileges of birth and education, or a mere outward profession of religion, or works of righteousness done; these are not everlasting, but sandy foundations; but Christ is the righteous man’s foundation, and he is the only one, (~~4BIB~~ 1 Corinthians 3:11). Some take the sense to be, the “righteous”, that is, Jesus Christ the righteous, “is an everlasting foundation”; he is the foundation of the church, the rock on which it is built; he is the foundation of the apostles and prophets, on which they were laid, and by whom they are saved; he is the foundation of every particular believer, they are rooted and built up on him; he is the foundation of their faith, hope, love, peace, joy, and comfort, and of their eternal glory and happiness: and an “everlasting one” he is; he is so in his person as God-man; in his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; in the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; and is a foundation which is sure, and will never fail: he has been the foundation of his people in all ages; and he is the same today, yesterday, and for ever. Hence, though the wicked pass away as the whirlwind, and by one, the righteous shall not; they are on a foundation, and cannot be blown off of it by the storms and tempests of Satan’s temptations, their own corruptions, the persecutions of men, the errors of the wicked, or by the whirlwind of divine wrath and vengeance. Some render it, “the righteous [is] the foundation of the world”^{f285}; the pillar and support of it; as the righteous are the salt of the earth, they are the stay of it: the whirlwind of God’s wrath would tear up the course of nature, dissolve the earth, and all things in it, were it not for the sake of the righteous; and, when they are called and gathered in, there will be a general dissolution of all things, (~~6ORD~~ 2 Peter 3:9,10).

Ver. 26. *As vinegar to the teeth*, etc.] Which, with its coldness and sourness, blunts the teeth, and makes it troublesome to eat: the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it,

“as the sour grape is hurtful to the teeth;”

sets them on edge;

and as smoke to the eye; dims the sight, causes the eye to water, and is very pernicious and vexatious:

so [is] the sluggard to them that send him: that is, the slothful messenger, as the Targum explains it; who, being sent on an errand, is dilatory, does not make haste to bring back the answer; which is very vexatious to those that send him, raises their passions, makes them fretful and very angry, be it on what account it will: so slothful and unprofitable servants, to whom talents are given for usefulness, which they hide or use not, are very provoking to Christ, and whom he will order into outer darkness; those who have gifts for sacred service ought not to be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, (^{<4256>}Matthew 25:26,29 ^{<4516>}Romans 12:6-11).

Ver. 27. *The fear of the Lord prolongeth days,* etc.] Not beyond the time fixed in the unalterable purposes and decrees of God, (^{<3846>}Job 14:5); but longer than some others, or than those that fear the Lord expect to live; or longer than, according to the course of nature, and the weakness of their constitutions, it could be thought they should live. Long life is promised to them that fear the Lord; godliness has the promise of this life and of that to come; the fear of the Lord is the means of preserving persons from those things which are pernicious to the health of men, and so of prolonging their days; as well as it has length of days, for ever and ever, even eternal life, annexed to it; (see ^{<4341>}Psalms 34:11-14);

but the years of the wicked shall be shortened; through diseases, which their sins bring upon them, which cut them off before they have lived out half their days; or by means of which, their sins, they come into the hand of the civil magistrate, and die before their time; or are taken off in their full strength by the immediate judgment of God, as were Ananias and Sapphira; and so they die in the midst of their days; and before the time, which, according to the course of nature, and the common period of life, in all human probability they might have arrived unto, (^{<4523>}Psalms 55:23 ^{<2077>}Ecclesiastes 7:17).

Ver. 28. *The hope of the righteous [shall be] gladness,* etc.] Or, “[is] gladness”^{f286}; it is now attended with joy; he has a pleasure in the exercise of the grace of hope as to future things; he rejoices in hope of the glory of God, and is enabled to hold fast the rejoicing of his hope firm unto the end, (^{<4840>}Romans 5:2 ^{<3836>}Hebrews 3:6); and the issue of his hope will be an abundant entrance into the joy of his Lord; a being brought into his presence, in which is fulness of joy; he is not ashamed of his hope now, and he will not be disappointed hereafter;

but the expectation of the wicked shall perish; his hope and expectation, either of riches, and honour, and pleasure in this world, or of a long life in it; or of happiness in the other, and of escaping the wrath of God, and the vengeance of eternal fire; all which, being grounded on a wrong bottom, shall be frustrated; see (~~1883~~-Job 8:13 11:20 27:8).

Ver. 29. *The way of the Lord [is] strength to the upright*, etc.] Who are upright in heart and life; who have the uprightness or righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and right spirits renewed in them; in consequence of which they walk uprightly, (~~3009~~-Proverbs 10:9). To these “the way of the Lord [is] strength”; both the way which he himself takes, and the way which he prescribes and directs his people to walk in: the way in which he walks in providence towards them is the strength of them; he is their shade on their right hand; he shows himself strong on their behalf; he is their fortress and strong tower, as the God of providence, even a wall of fire round about them: and the way he takes in the discoveries of his love; in the communications of his grace; in the application of precious promises; by granting the influences of his Spirit; and by leading to his Son, the than of his right hand, made strong for himself and them, is very strengthening unto them: so likewise the way in which he leads his people, the way of his word and ordinances; which, as it is pleasant, so strengthening; the more they walk in them, the stronger they are; they go from strength to strength, they grow stronger and stronger by them; while they are waiting on the Lord in them, their spiritual strength is renewed: moreover, walking in the way of the Lord gives them spirit and courage, and makes them bold and intrepid; so that they fear no enemy, nor any dangers and difficulties, but go on their way cheerfully and pleasantly;

but destruction [shall be] to the workers of iniquity; not to all that do iniquity, for no man lives without sin; but to those who give up themselves to it, make a trade of it; whose course of life is sinful, and do nothing else but sin; this their way leads to ruin; destruction and misery are now in all their ways, and will be the certain issue of them, even destruction of both soul and body; which will be swift and sudden, come upon them before they are aware, and will be everlasting; it will continue for ever, and there will be no deliverance from it. The Word^{f287} signifies terror and consternation; and such seize on a wicked man at death, to whom death is the king of terrors; and which will still more strongly possess him when in hell he lifts up his eyes; and also at the day of judgment, when he shall see the Judge coming in the clouds of heaven, sitting on a fiery throne, and

shall hear him pronounce him cursed. The clause may be rendered, but the way of the Lord is “terror to the workers of iniquity”^{f288}; the way of the Lord in his works of providence, in which he oftentimes does terrible things in righteousness; and he is very terrible to men in his judgments here, and will be more so in his awful procedure at the last judgment.

Ver. 30. *The righteous shall never be removed*, etc.] They may be removed from place to place in this world, through the persecutions of their enemies, or through one providence or another, as they often are; they may be removed from a state of outward prosperity to a state of adversity, as Job was; they may be removed from spiritual and comfortable frames of soul to carnal or uncomfortable ones; for good frames are very precarious and uncertain things; and they will be removed out of this world into another; here they have no continuing city: but they shall never be removed from the love of God, nothing can separate them from that; they are set as a seal on his heart, and are engraven on the palms of his hands, and there is no removing them from thence; they may be waiver about their interest in the love of God; they may be without the manifestations and discoveries of it to their souls; they may be under the hidings of God’s face; they may be at a distance from his house and ordinances, or may not enjoy the presence of God in them for a time; yet not separated from his affections; they shall never be removed out of the hands of Christ, into which they are put for security, and out of which none can pluck them, men or devils; how should they, since they are in those hands that made the heavens and the earth, support all in being, and hold the reins of government? Was it possible they could be removed from hence, it would impeach the wisdom of God, who has put them there; argue weakness in Christ, and suppose danger to them. Nor can they be removed out of the family of God; sons of God abide in his house for ever; they are no more foreigners and strangers; once children, no more servants; they may be corrected and chastised, yet be children; they may judge themselves unworthy of the relation, and be ready to conclude that their spots are not the spots of God’s children, and fear they are none of them, and yet the relation continues: nor will they ever be removed from their state of justification, by which they are denominated righteous, into a state of condemnation; for full satisfaction is given to law and justice for them; their justification is complete, it is from all sin; the righteousness by which they are justified is everlasting, and even their faith which receives it shall never fail; to which may be added, that they are secured from wrath to

come, and entitled to eternal life. In a word, they are on the sure foundation of electing grace; they are in the immovable covenant of grace; they are on the Rock of ages, Christ Jesus; all the divine Persons and perfections are on their side; they are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation; see (^{<4852>}Psalm 55:22 125:1,2);

but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth; but a very little while, as Gersom observes; and the time of their abode on earth is so short, as scarce to be called an inhabitation of it. Moreover, they shall not inhabit the earth the righteous will, even the new earth, which none but righteous persons shall inhabit, (^{<6183>}2 Peter 3:13); see (^{<4970>}Psalm 37:9,11,22,29).

Ver. 31. *The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom*, etc.] As the earth brings forth its increase, and a tree brings forth its fruit; hence speech is called the fruit of the lips; wisdom is good fruit; a good man is comparable to the fruitful earth, and to a good tree; whose mouth brings forth wise things in abundance, which are very pleasant and profitable; not worldly wisdom, much less devilish; not merely natural wisdom, but spiritual and evangelical; (see ^{<4973>}Psalm 37:30);

but the froward tongue shall be cut out; or “cut down”^{f289}; as an unprofitable tree, which brings forth nothing but perverse things; things contrary to God and good men, to truth and right reason, to the light of nature, the law of God, and Gospel of Christ. Such “a tongue of perversities”^{f290}, as it may be rendered, that brings forth blasphemies against God, his tabernacle and his saints, as the tongue of antichrist does, deserves to be cut out, as the tongue of a blasphemer.

Ver. 32. *The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable*, etc.] To God and man; what is well pleasing to, God, and what ministers grace to the hearers, or what is grateful: and such things they will deliver out; they are used and accustomed to them; not only the righteous know in their judgment what is acceptable, but they use themselves to say those things; they not only know them in theory, but practise them: some men know what is acceptable, but their lips do not know it; they are not used to it, but the contrary;

but the mouth of the wicked [speaketh] frowardness; or perverse things, as before. Or, “the mouth of the wicked [knoweth] frowardness”^{f291}; or perverse things; or is used only to speak froward things; things contrary to truth and righteousness, and which they know to be so; their mouth speaks

things contrary to their hearts; their hearts and mouths do not agree, when they both flatter and lie.