

CHAPTER 10

Hitherto we have been in the porch or preface to the proverbs, here they begin. They are short but weighty sentences; most of them are distichs, two sentences in one verse, illustrating each other; but it is seldom that there is any coherence between the verses, much less any thread of discourse, and therefore in these chapters we need not attempt to reduce the contents to their proper heads, the several sentences will appear best in their own places. The scope of them all is to set before us good and evil, the blessing and the curse. Many of the proverbs in this chapter relate to the good government of the tongue, without which men's religion is vain.

PROVERBS 10:1

WEIGHTY SAYINGS

Solomon, speaking to us as unto children, observes here how much the comfort of parents, natural, political, and ecclesiastical, depends upon the good behaviour of those under their charge, as a reason,

1. Why parents should be careful to give their children a good education, and to train them up in the ways of religion, which, if it obtain the desired effect, they themselves will have the comfort of it, or, if not, they will have for their support under their heaviness that they have done their duty, have done their endeavour.
2. Why children should conduct themselves wisely and well, and live up to their good education, that they may gladden the hearts of their parents, and not sadden them. Observe,
(1.) It adds to the comfort of young people that are pious and discreet that thereby they do something towards recompensing their parents for all the care and pains they have taken with them, and occasion pleasure to them in the evil days of old age, when they most need it; and it is the duty of parents to rejoice in their children's wisdom and well-doing, yea, though it arrive at such an eminency as to eclipse them.

(2.) It adds to the guilt of those that conduct themselves ill that thereby they grieve those whom they ought to be a joy to, and are a heaviness particularly to their poor mothers who bore them with sorrow, but with greater sorrow see them wicked and vile.

PROVERBS 10:2-3

WEIGHTY SAYINGS

These two verses speak to the same purport, and the latter may be the reason of the former.

1. That wealth which men get unjustly will do them no good, because God will blast it: *Treasures of wickedness profit nothing*, v. 2. The treasures of wicked people, much more the treasure which they have made themselves masters of by any wicked people, by oppression of fraud, though it be ever so much, as a treasure, and laid up ever so safely, though it be hidden treasure, yet it *profits nothing*; when profit and loss come to be balanced the profit gained by the treasures will by no means countervail the loss sustained by the wickedness, ~~4166~~ Matthew 16:26. They do not profit the soul; they will not purchase any true comfort or happiness. They will stand a man in no stead at death, or in the judgment of the great day; and the reason is because God *casts away the substance of the wicked* (v. 3); he takes that from them which they have unjustly gotten; he rejects the consideration of it, not regarding the rich more than the poor. We often see that scattered by the justice of God which has been gathered together by the injustice of men. How can the treasures of wickedness profit, when, though it be counted substance, God casts it away and it vanishes as a shadow?

2. That which is honestly got will turn to a good account, for God will bless it. *Righteousness delivers from death*, that is, wealth gained, and kept, and used, in a right manner (righteousness signifies both honesty and charity); it answers the end of wealth, which is to keep us alive and be a defence to us. It will deliver from those judgments which men bring upon themselves by their wickedness. It will profit to such a degree as to deliver, though not from the stroke of death, yet from the sting of it, and consequently from the terror of it. For *the Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish* (v. 3), and so their *righteousness delivers from*

death, purely by the favour of God to them, which is their life and livelihood, and which will keep them alive in famine. The soul of the righteous shall be kept alive by the word of God, and faith in his promise, when *young lions shall lack and suffer hunger*.

PROVERBS 10:4

WEIGHTY SAYINGS

We are here told,

- 1.** Who those are who, though rich, are in a fair way to *become poor* — those *who deal with a slack hand*, who are careless and remiss in their business, and never mind which end goes foremost, nor ever set their hands vigorously to their work or stick to it; those *who deal with a deceitful hand* (so it may be read); those who think to enrich themselves by fraud and tricking will, in the end, impoverish themselves, not only by bringing the curse of God on what they have, but by forfeiting their reputation with men; none will care to deal with those who deal with sleight of hand and are honest only with good looking to.
- 2.** Who those are who, though poor, are in a fair way to become rich — those who are diligent and honest, who are careful about their affairs, and, what their hands find to do, do it with all their might, in a fair and honourable way, those are likely to increase what they have. *The hand of the acute* (so some), of those who are sharp, but not sharpers; *the hand of the active* (so others); the stirring hand gets a penny. This is true in the affairs of our souls as well as in our worldly affairs; slothfulness and hypocrisy lead to spiritual poverty, but those who are *fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*, are likely to be *rich in faith* and *rich in good works*.

PROVERBS 10:5

WEIGHTY SAYINGS

Here is,

1. The just praise of those who improve their opportunities, who take pains to gather and increase what they have, both for soul and body, who provide for hereafter while provision is to be made, who *gather in summer*, which is gathering time. He who does so *is a wise son*, and it is his honour; he acts wisely for his parents, whom, if there be occasion, he ought to maintain, and he gives reputation to himself, his family, and his education.


2. The just reproach and blame of those who trifle away these opportunities: *He who sleeps*, loves his ease, idles away his time, and neglects his work, especially *who sleeps in harvest*, when he should be laying in for winter, who lets slip the season of furnishing himself with that which he will have occasion for, *is a son that causes shame*; for he is a foolish son; he prepares shame for himself when winter comes, and reflects shame upon all his friends. He who gets knowledge and wisdom in the days of his youth *gathers in summer*, and he will have the comfort and credit of his industry; but he who idles away the days of his youth will bear the shame of his indolence when he is old.

PROVERBS 10:6

WEIGHTY SAYINGS

Here is,

1. *The head of the just crowned with blessings*, with the blessings both of God and man. Variety of blessings, abundance of blessings, shall descend from above, and visibly abide on the head of good men, real blessings; they shall not only be spoken well of, but done well to. Blessings shall be on their head as a coronet to adorn and dignify them and as a helmet to protect and secure them.

2. *The mouth of the wicked covered with violence*. Their mouths shall be stopped with shame for the violence which they have done; they shall not have a word to say in excuse for themselves ( Job 5:16); their breath shall be stopped with the violence that shall be done to them, when their violent dealings shall return on their heads, shall be returned to their teeth.

PROVERBS 10:7

MARKS OF WISDOM AND OF FOLLY

Both the just and the wicked, when their days are fulfilled, must die. Between their bodies in the grave there is no visible difference; between the souls of the one and the other, in the world of spirits, there is a vast difference, and so there is, or ought to be, between their memories, which survive them.

I. Good men are and ought to be well spoken of when they are gone; it is one of the blessings that *comes upon the head of the just*, even when their head is laid. Blessed men leave behind them blessed memories.

1. It is part of the dignity of the saints, especially those who excel in virtue and are eminently useful, that they are remembered with respect when they are dead. Their good name, their name with good men, for good things, is then in a special manner as *precious ointment*, ^{<200>}Ecclesiastes 7:1. Those that honour God he will thus honour, ^{<400>}Psalms 112:3, 6, 9. *The elders by faith obtained a good report* (^{<800>}Hebrews 11:2), and, being dead, are yet spoken of.

2. It is part of the duty of the survivors: *Let the memory of the just be blessed*, so the Jews read it, and observe it as a precept, not naming an eminently just man that is dead without adding, *Let his memory be blessed*. We must delight in making an honourable mention of good men that are gone, bless God for them, and for his gifts and graces that appeared in them, and especially be followers of them in *that which is good*.

II. Bad men are and shall be forgotten, or spoken of with contempt. When their bodies are putrefying in the grave their *names also shall rot*. Either they shall not be preserved at all, but buried in oblivion (no good can be said of them, and therefore the greatest kindness that can be done them will be to say nothing of them), or they shall be loathsome, and mentioned with detestation, and that rule of honour, *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* — *Say nothing to the disadvantage of the dead*, will not protect them. Where the wickedness has been notorious, and cannot but be mentioned, it ought to be mentioned with abhorrence.

~~2008~~ PROVERBS 10:8

MARKS OF WISDOM AND OF FOLLY

Here is,

1. The honour and happiness of the obedient. They *will receive commandments*; they will take it as a privilege, and really an ease to them, to be under government, which saves them the labour of deliberating and choosing for themselves; and they will take it as a favour to be told their duty and admonished concerning it. And this is their wisdom; those are *wise in heart* who are tractable, and those who thus bend, thus stoop, shall stand and be established, shall prosper, being well advised.

2. The shame and ruin of the disobedient, that will not be governed, nor endure any yoke, that will not be taught, nor take any advice. They are fools, for they act against themselves and their own interest; they are commonly *prating fools*, fools of lips, full of talk, but full of nonsense, boasting of themselves, prating spitefully against those that admonish them (~~400~~3 John 1:10), and pretending to give counsel and law to others. Of all fools, none more troublesome than the *prating fools*, nor that more expose themselves; but they *shall fall* into sin, into hell, because they received not commandments. Those that are full of tongue seldom look well to their feet, and therefore stumble and fall.

~~2009~~ PROVERBS 10:9

MARKS OF WISDOM AND OF FOLLY

We are here told, and we may depend upon it,

1. That men's integrity will be their security: *He that walks uprightly* towards God and man, that is faithful to both, that designs as he ought and means as he says, *walks surely*; he is safe under a divine protection and easy in a holy security. He goes on his way with a humble boldness, being well armed against the temptations of Satan, the troubles of the world, and the reproaches of men. he knows what ground he stands on, what guide he follows, what guard he is surrounded with, and what glory he is going to, and therefore proceeds with assurance and *great peace*, ~~2307~~ Isaiah 32:17;

33:15, 16. Some understand it as part of the character of an upright man, that he *walks surely*, in opposition to walking at all adventures. He will not dare to do that which he is not fully satisfied in his own conscience concerning the lawfulness of, but will see his way clear in every thing.

2. That men's dishonesty will be their shame: *He that perverts his way*, that turns aside into crooked paths, that dissembles with God and man, looks one way and rows another, though he may for a time disguise himself, and pass current, *shall be known* to be what he is. It is a thousand to one but some time or other he betrays himself; at least, God will discover him in the great day. *He that perverts his ways documento erit — shall be made an example of*, for warning to others; so some.

<100>PROVERBS 10:10

MARKS OF WISDOM AND OF FOLLY

Mischief is here said to attend,

1. Politic, designing, self-disguising sinners: *He that winks with the eye*, as if he took no notice of you, when at the same time he is watching an opportunity to do you an ill turn, that makes signs to his accomplices when to come into assist him in executing his wicked projects, which are all carried on by trick and artifice, *causes sorrow* both to others and to himself. Ingenuity will be no excuse for iniquity, but the sinner must either repent or do worse, either rue it or be ruined by it.

2. Public, silly, self-exposing sinners: *A prating fool*, whose sins go before unto judgment, *shall fall*, as was said before, v. 8. But his case is less dangerous of the two, and, though he destroys himself, he does not create so much sorrow to others as *he that winks with his eyes*. The dog that bites is not always the dog that barks.

<100>PROVERBS 10:11

MARKS OF WISDOM AND OF FOLLY

See here,

1. How industrious a good man is, by communicating his goodness, to do good with it: *His mouth*, the outlet of his mind, *is a well of life*; it is a constant spring, whence issues good discourse for the edification of others, like streams that water the ground and make it fruitful, and for their consolation, like streams that quench the thirst of the weary traveller. It is like *a well of life*, that is pure and clean, not only not poisoned, but not muddled, with any corrupt communication.

2. How industrious a bad man is, by concealing his badness, to do hurt with it: *The mouth of the wicked covers violence*, disguises the designed mischief with professions of friendship, that it may be carried on the more securely and effectually, as Joab kissed and killed, Judas kissed and betrayed; this is his sin, to which the punishment answers (v. 6): *Violence covers the mouth of the wicked*; what he got by violence shall by violence be taken from him, ~~xxx~~ Job 5:4, 5.

~~xxx~~ PROVERBS 10:12

MARKS OF WISDOM AND OF FOLLY

Here is,

1. The great mischief-maker, and that is malice. Even where there is no manifest occasion of strife, yet *hatred* seeks occasion and so *stirs it up* and does the devil's work. Those are the most spiteful ill-natured people that can be who take a pleasure in setting their neighbours together by the ears, by tale-bearing, evil surmises, and misrepresentations, blowing up the sparks of contention, which had lain buried, into a flame, at which, with an unaccountable pleasure, they warm their hands.

2. The great peace-maker, and that is *love*, which *covers all sins*, that is, the offences among relations which occasion discord. Love, instead of proclaiming and aggravating the offence, conceals and extenuates it as far as it is capable of being concealed and extenuated. Love will excuse the offence which we give through mistake and unadvisedly; when we are able to say that there was no ill intended, but it was an oversight, and we love our friend notwithstanding, this covers it. It will also overlook the offence that is given us, and so cover it, and make the best of it: by this means strife is prevented, or, if begun, peace is recovered and restored

quickly. The apostle quotes this, ~~4008~~1 Peter 4:8. *Love will cover a multitude of sins.*

~~4003~~ PROVERBS 10:13

MARKS OF WISDOM AND OF FOLLY

Observe,

1. Wisdom and grace are the honour of good men: He *that has understanding*, that good understanding which those have that do the commandments, *wisdom is found in his lips*, that is, it is discovered to be there, and consequently that he has within a good treasure of it, and it is derived thence for the benefit of others. It is a man's honour to have wisdom, but much more to be instrumental to make others wise.

2. Folly and sin are the shame of bad men: *A rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding — of him that wants a heart*; he exposes himself to the lashes of his own conscience, to the scourges of the tongue, to the censures of the magistrate, and to the righteous judgments of God. Those that foolishly and wilfully go on in wicked ways are preparing rods for themselves, the marks of which will be their perpetual disgrace.

~~4004~~ PROVERBS 10:14

MARKS OF WISDOM AND OF FOLLY

Observe,

1. It is the wisdom of the wise that they treasure up a stock of useful knowledge, which will be their preservation: *Wisdom is therefore found in their lips* (v. 13), because it is laid up in their hearts, out of which store, like the good householder, they bring things new and old. Whatever knowledge may be at any time useful to us we must *lay it up*, because we know not but some time or other we may have occasion for it. We must continue laying up as long as we live; and be sure to lay it up safely, that it may not be to seek when we want it.

2. It is the folly of fools that they lay up mischief in their hearts, which is ready to them in all they say, and works terror and destruction both to others and to themselves. They *love devouring words* (~~3874~~ Psalm 52:4), and these come uppermost. Their *mouth is near destruction*, having the *sharp arrows of bitter words* always at hand to throw about.

~~3005~~ PROVERBS 10:15

MARKS OF WISDOM AND OF FOLLY

This may be taken two ways: —

1. As a reason why we should be diligent in our business, that we may avoid that sinking dispiriting uneasiness which attends poverty, and may enjoy the benefit and comfort which those have that are beforehand in the world. Taking pains is really the way to make ourselves and our families easy. Or, rather,

2. As a representation of the common mistakes both of rich and poor, concerning their outward condition.

(1.) Rich people think themselves happy because they are rich; but it is their mistake: *The rich man's wealth is*, in his own conceit, *his strong city*, whereas the worst of evils it is too weak and utterly insufficient to protect them from. It will prove that they are not so safe as they imagine; nay, their wealth may perhaps expose them.

(2.) Poor people think themselves undone because they are poor; but it is their mistake: *The destruction of the poor is their poverty*; it sinks their spirits, and ruins all their comforts; whereas a man may live very comfortably, though he has but a little to live on, if he be but content, and keep a good conscience, and live by faith.

~~3006~~ PROVERBS 10:16

MARKS OF WISDOM AND OF FOLLY

Solomon here confirms what his father had said (~~3876~~ Psalm 37:16), *A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked.*

1. Perhaps a righteous man has no more than what he works hard for; he eats only *the labour of his hands*, but that *labour tends to life*; he aims at nothing but to get an honest livelihood, covets not to be rich and great, but is willing to live and maintain his family. Nor does it tend only to his own life, but he would enable himself to do good to others; he labours *that he may have to give* (~~4008~~ Ephesians 4:28); all his business turns to some good account or other. Or it may be meant of his labour in religion; he takes most pains in that which has a tendency to eternal life; he *sows to the Spirit*, that he may *reap life everlasting*.

2. Perhaps a wicked man's wealth is fruit which he did not labour for, but came easily by, but it tends *to sin*. He makes it the food and fuel of his lusts, his pride and luxury; he gets hurt with it and not good; he gets hurt by it and is hardened by it in his wicked ways. The things of this world are good or evil, life or death, as they are used, and as those are that have them.

~~4007~~ PROVERBS 10:17

MARKS OF WISDOM AND OF FOLLY

See here,

1. That those are in the right that do not only receive instruction, but retain it, that do not let it slip through carelessness, as most do, nor let it go to those that would rob them of it, that *keep instruction* safely, keep it pure and entire, keep it for their own use, that they may govern themselves by it, keep it for the benefit of others, that they may instruct them; those that do so are *in the way of life*, the way that has true comfort in it and eternal life at the end of it.

2. That those are in the wrong that do not only not receive instruction, but wilfully and obstinately refuse it when it is offered them. They will not be taught their duty because it discovers their faults to them; that instruction which carries reproof in it they have a particular aversion to, and certainly they err; it is a sign that they err in judgment, and have false notions of good and evil; it is a cause of their erring in conversation. The traveller that has missed his way, and cannot bear to be told of it and shown the

right way, must needs err still, err endlessly; he certainly misses *the way of life*.

PROVERBS 10:18

THE PROPER USE OF THE TONGUE

Observe here, Malice is folly and wickedness.

1. It is so when it is concealed by flattery and dissimulation: He *is a fool*, though he may think himself a politician, *that hides hatred with lying lips*, lest, if it break out, he should be ashamed before men and should lose the opportunity of gratifying his malice. *Lying lips* are bad enough of themselves, but have a peculiar malignity in them when they are made *a cloak of maliciousness*. But he *is a fool* who thinks to hide any thing from God.

2. It is no better when it is vented in spiteful and mischievous language: *He that utters slander is a fool* too, for God will sooner or later bring forth that righteousness as the light which he endeavours to cloud, and will find an expedient to roll the reproach away.

PROVERBS 10:19

THE PROPER USE OF THE TONGUE

We are here admonished concerning the government of the tongue, that necessary duty of a Christian.

1. It is good to say little, because *in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin*, or *sin doth not cease*. Usually, those that speak much speak much amiss, and among many words there cannot but be many idle words, which they must shortly give an account of. Those that love to hear themselves talk do not consider what work they are making for repentance; for that will be wanted, and first or last will be had, where *there wanteth not sin*.

2. It is therefore good to *keep our mouth as with a bridle*: *He that refrains his lips*, that often checks himself, suppresses what he has thought, and

holds in that which would transpire, is a wise man; it is an evidence of his wisdom, and he therein consults his own peace. Little said is soon amended, ^{<40B>}Amos 5:13; ^{<40B>}James 1:19.

^{<40B>}PROVERBS 10:20-21

THE PROPER USE OF THE TONGUE

We are here taught how to value men, not by their wealth and preferment in the world, but by their virtue.

I. Good men are good for something. Though they may be poor and low in the world, and may not have power and riches to do good with, yet, as long as they have a mouth to speak, that will make them valuable and useful, and upon that account we must honour those that fear the Lord, because *out of the good treasure of their heart they bring forth good things*.

1. This makes them valuable: *The tongue of the just is as choice silver*; they are sincere, freed from the dross of guile and evil design. God's words are compared to *silver purified* (^{<40B>}Psalm 12:6), for they may be relied on; and such are the words of just men. They are of weight and worth, and will enrich those that hear them with wisdom, which is better than *choice silver*.

2. It makes them useful: *The lips of the righteous feed many*; for they are full of the word of God, which is the bread of life, and that sound doctrine wherewith souls are nourished up. Pious discourse is spiritual food to the needy, to the hungry.

II. Bad men are good for nothing.

1. One can get no good by them: *The heart of the wicked is little worth*, and therefore that which comes out of the abundance of his heart cannot be worth much. His principles, his notions, his thoughts, his purposes, and all the things that fill him, and affect him, are worldly and carnal, and therefore of no value. *He that is of the earth speaks of the earth*, and neither understands nor relishes the things of God, ^{<40B>}John 3:31; ^{<40B>}1 Corinthians 2:14. The wicked man pretends that, though he does not talk of religion as the just do, yet he has it within him, and thanks God that his

heart is good; but he that searches the heart here says the contrary: *It is nothing worth.*

2. One can do no good to them. While many are fed by *the lips of the righteous, fools die for want of wisdom*; and fools indeed they are to die for want of that which they might so easily come by. *Fools die for want of a heart* (so the word is); they perish for want of consideration and resolution; they have no heart to do any thing for their own good. While the righteous feed others fools starve themselves.

PROVERBS 10:22

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Worldly wealth is that which most men have their hearts very much upon, but they generally mistake both in the nature of the thing they desire and in the way by which they hope to obtain it; we are therefore told here,

1. What that wealth is which is indeed desirable, not having abundance only, but having it and *no sorrow with it*, no disquieting care to get and keep it, no vexation of spirit in the enjoyment of it, no tormenting grief for the loss of it, no guilt contracted by the abuse of it — to have it and to have a heart to take the comfort of it, to do good with it and to serve God with joyfulness and gladness of heart in the use of it.

2. Whence this desirable wealth is to be expected, not by making ourselves drudges to the world (^{3CTD}Psalm 127:2), but by *the blessing of God*. It is this that *makes rich and adds no sorrow*; what comes from the love of God has the grace of God for its companion, to preserve the soul from those turbulent lusts and passions of which, otherwise, the increase of riches is commonly the incentive. He had said (v. 4), *The hand of the diligent makes rich*, as a means; but here he ascribes it to *the blessing of the Lord*; but that blessing is upon *the hand of the diligent*. It is thus in spiritual riches. Diligence in getting them is our duty, but God's blessing and grace must have all the glory of that which is acquired,

(^{3B87}Deuteronomy 8:17, 18.

PROVERBS 10:23

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Here is,

1. Sin exceedingly sinful: *It is as laughter to a fool to do mischief*; it is as natural to him, and as pleasant, as it is to a man to laugh. *Wickedness is his Isaac* (that is the word here); it is his delight, his darling, and that in which he pleases himself. He makes a laughing matter of sin. When he is warned not to sin, from the consideration of the law of God and the revelation of his wrath against sin, he makes a jest of the admonition, and laughs at the shaking of the spear; when he has sinned, instead of sorrowing for it, he boasts of it, ridicules reproofs, and laughs away the convictions of his own conscience, ¹⁴⁹Proverbs 14:9.

2. Wisdom exceedingly wise, for it carries along with it the evidence of its own excellency; it may be predicated of itself, and this is encomium enough; you need say no more in praise of *a man of understanding* than this, “He is an *understanding man*; he *has wisdom*; he is so wise as not to do mischief, or if he has, through oversight, offended, he is so wise as not to make a jest of it.” Or, to pronounce wisdom wise indeed, read it thus: *As it is a sport to a fool to do mischief, so it is to a man of understanding to have wisdom and to show it.* Besides the future recompence, a good man has as much present pleasure in the restraints and exercises of religion as sinners can pretend to in the liberties and enjoyments of sin, and much more, and much better.

PROVERBS 10:24-25

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE RIGHTEOUS

It is here said, and said again, to the righteous, that *it shall be well with them*, and to the wicked, *Woe to them*; and these are set the one over against the other, for their mutual illustration.

I. It shall be as ill with the wicked as they can fear, and as well with the righteous as they can desire.

1. The wicked, it is true, buoy themselves up sometimes in their wickedness with vain hopes which will deceive them, but at other times they cannot but be haunted with just fears, and those *fears shall come upon them*; the God they provoke will be every whit as terrible as they, when they are under their greatest damps, apprehend him to be. *As is thy fear, so is thy wrath,* ~~<390>~~ Psalm 90:11. Wicked men fear the punishment of sin, but they have not wisdom to improve their fears by making their escape, and so the thing they feared comes upon them, and their present terrors are earnest of their future torments.

2. The righteous, it is true, sometimes have their fears, but their desire is towards the favour of God and a happiness in him, and that *desire shall be granted*. According to their faith, not according to their fear, it shall be *unto them,* ~~<370>~~ Psalm 37:4.

II. The prosperity of the wicked shall quickly end, but the happiness of the righteous shall never end, v. 25. The wicked make a great noise, hurry themselves and others, like a *whirlwind*, which threatens to bear down all before it; but, like a *whirlwind*, they are presently gone, and they pass irrecoverably; they are *no more*; all about them are quiet and glad when the storm is over, ~~<370>~~ Psalm 37:10, 36; ~~<380>~~ Job 20:5. *The righteous*, on the contrary, make no show; they lie hid, like a *foundation*, which is low and out of sight, but they are fixed in their resolution to cleave to God, established in virtue, and they shall be an *everlasting foundation*, immovably good. He that is holy shall be holy still and immovably happy; his hope is built on a rock, and therefore not shocked by the storm, ~~<402>~~ Matthew 7:24. *The righteous is the pillar of the world* (so some read it); the world stands for their sakes; the holy seed is the substance thereof.

~~<410>~~ PROVERBS 10:26

THE ADVANTAGES OF THE RIGHTEOUS

Observe,

1. Those that are of a slothful disposition, that love their ease and cannot apply their minds to any business, are not fit to be employed, no, not so much as to be sent on an errand, for they will neither deliver a message with any care nor make any haste back. Such therefore are very unmeet to

be ministers, Christ's messengers; he will not own the sending forth of sluggards into his harvest.

2. Those that are guilty of so great an oversight as to entrust such with any affair, and put confidence in them, will certainly have vexation with them. A slothful servant is to his master as uneasy and troublesome as *vinegar to the teeth* and *smoke to the eyes*; he provokes his passion, as vinegar sets the teeth on edge, and occasions him grief to see his business neglected and undone, as smoke sets the eyes a weeping.

~~117~~ PROVERBS 10:27-28

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

Observe,

1. Religion lengthens men's lives and crowns their hopes. *What man is he that loves life?* Let him *fear God*, and that will secure him from many things that would prejudice his life, and secure to him life enough in this world and eternal life in the other; *the fear of the Lord* will add days more than was expected, will add them endlessly, will prolong them to the days of eternity. *What man is he that would see good days?* Let him be religious, and then his days shall not only be many, but happy, very happy as well as very many, for *the hope of the righteous shall be gladness*; they shall have what they hope for, to their unspeakable satisfaction. It is something future and unseen that they place their happiness in (~~118~~ Romans 8:24, 25), not what they have in hand, but what they have in hope, and their hope will shortly be swallowed up in fruition, and it will be their everlasting *gladness*. *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

2. Wickedness shortens men's lives, and frustrates their hopes: *The years of the wicked*, that are spent in the pleasures of sin and the drudgery of the world, *shall be shortened*. Cut down the trees that cumber the ground. And whatever comfort or happiness a wicked man promises himself, in this world or the other, he will be frustrated; for *the expectation of the wicked shall perish*; his hope shall be turned into endless despair.

PROVERBS 10:29-30

THE RIGHTEOUS EXCLUSIVELY HAPPY

These two verses are to the same purport with those next before, intimating the happiness of the godly and the misery of the wicked; it is necessary that this be inculcated upon us, so loth are we to believe and consider it.

1. Strength and stability are entailed upon integrity: *The way of the Lord* (the providence of God, the way in which he walks towards us) *is strength to the upright*, confirms him in his uprightness. All God's dealings with him, merciful and afflictive, serve to quicken him to his duty and animate him against his discouragements. Or *the way of the Lord* (the way of godliness, in which he appoints us to walk) *is strength to the upright*; the closer we keep to that way, the more our hearts are enlarged to proceed in it, the better fitted we are both for services and sufferings. A good conscience, kept pure from sin, gives a man boldness in a dangerous time, and constant diligence in duty makes a man's work easy in a busy time. The more we do for God the more we may do, ^{<370>}Job 17:9. That *joy of the Lord* which is to be found only in the *way of the Lord* will be our strength (^{<380>}Nehemiah 8:10), and therefore *the righteous shall never be removed*. Those that have an established virtue have an established peace and happiness which nothing can rob them of; they *have an everlasting foundation*, v. 25.

2. Ruin and destruction are the certain consequences of wickedness. *The wicked shall not only not inherit the earth*, though they lay up their treasure in it, but they shall not so much as *inhabit the earth*; God's judgments will root them out. *Destruction*, swift and sure destruction, *shall be to the workers of iniquity*, destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. Nay, that way of the Lord which is the strength of the upright is consumption and terror *to the workers of iniquity*; the same gospel which to the one is a *savour of life unto life* to the other is a *savour of death unto death*; the same providence, like the same sun, softens the one and hardens the other, ^{<340>}Hosea 14:9.

~~108~~ PROVERBS 10:31-32

WEIGHTY SAYINGS

Here, as before, men are judged of, and, accordingly, are justified or condemned, by their words, ~~125~~ Matthew 12:37.

1. It is both the proof and the praise of a man's wisdom and goodness that he speaks wisely and well. A good man, in his discourse, *brings forth wisdom* for the benefit of others. God gives him wisdom as a reward of his righteousness (~~206~~ Ecclesiastes 2:26), and he, in gratitude for that gift and justice to the giver, does good with it, and with his wise and pious discourses edifies many. He *knows what is acceptable*, what discourse will be pleasing to God (for that is it that he studies more than to oblige the company), and what will be agreeable both to the speaker and to the hearers, what will become him and benefit them, and that he will speak.

2. It is the sin, and will be the ruin, of a wicked man, that he speaks wickedly like himself. *The mouth of the wicked speaks frowardness*, that which is displeasing to God and provoking to those he converses with; and what is the issue of it? Why, *the froward tongue shall be cut out*, as surely as the *flattering one*, ~~308~~ Psalm 12:3.