

A Guide To The Reader

Pastor recommends that to obtain maximum benefit from his comments you read in full from the Bible every reference whenever one appears. Otherwise the reading of the comments is simply a skimming over the surface. They are rather designed to make you stop and meditate and even look up further references as the Holy Spirit guides you. Do pray before you read that the Holy Spirit will be your Tutor and that the time you spend will be time spent with Him.

Proverbs 8

As we saw in Proverbs 1.20 and the verses which followed, the wisdom of Christ reaches out through the gospel to those who are astray, who are not churchgoers, who are strangers to that gospel. It is a plea to reject purposeless ways, to consider priorities and to lay hold of Christ. “For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4.18). Christ, “the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1.24), “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2.3) makes a direct appeal to the hearts of men and women, even in Old Testament days.

Assuredly, in the conscience but more particularly in the reading of the scriptures and the preaching of the gospel, wisdom cries out to people. On the top of mountains where “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills” (Psalm 121.1) to see the grandeur of nature, “the everlasting hills” (Genesis 49.26), or as the place, also, where the false worship of false gods is rife (Jeremiah 2.20). The Saviour calls by the gospel that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein (Isaiah 35.8) and to the judges (Psalm 82.2) and merchants at the gate (Nehemiah 13. 15-21) to do justly in all their doings and to believe in the God of all the earth Who does right (Genesis 18.25). The call goes out to all sorts and conditions of men to take heed of Christ. “Unto you, O men, I call” (8.4).

The gospel speaks of the most excellent things; but where the Saviour Himself draws a person that gospel is believed internally and that wisdom made their very own. “They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge” (8.9).

“Doth not wisdom cry?” Certainly. The Lord Jesus Christ commands concerning His gospel, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16.15). “My voice is to the sons of men” (8.4). Even the simple and the fools are not overlooked. The cry is to hear. “But they said, We will not hearken” (Jeremiah 6.17).

We are very ready to hear the siren voices of sexual excitement or the opinions of self-appointed experts with their own political or other agendas but, says, Jesus, “ye will not come to me that ye might have life” (John 5.40). Why not? He declares, “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own

name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5.43-44). "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing forward or perverse in them" (8.8). "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14.6)

"Receive my instruction, and not silver...wisdom is better than rubies" (8.10-11). "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1.11-12).

The Lord Jesus Christ is "head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1.22) and, to that end, kings, princes and judges fulfil their respective ministries under the Lord's direction. This same Saviour loves to guide them that ask Him with all wisdom, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me" (8.17). He speaks of "durable riches and righteousness" (8.18) and in the same way he holds out to his disciples the prospect, "ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15.16). "My fruit is better than gold" (8.19).

"I lead in the way of righteousness...that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance". The substance here spoken of is within, "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3.4). This would be a good time to read again 1 Corinthians 1.17-31 and that will prepare us for the exceptional passage which begins at Proverbs 8.22.

Almost the last words which Jesus spoke to His disciples were "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John 16.28). These words so impressed John that he began his gospel along those lines. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not...He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1.1-5, 10-12, 14).

Now you will readily see that nearly one thousand years before, Solomon had been moved to write of the Lord Jesus Christ not dissimilar things. "The LORD possessed

me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was...when he prepared the heavens I was there...then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men” (8.22-23, 27, 30-31).

As we consider the person of Christ in creation it would be a good time to refresh ourselves with the wonder of these things by reading Job 38-42.

What a wonderful thing it is that believers in having Christ have Him as their wisdom. His wisdom extends to every precision calculation of the universe with its planetary courses – its creation (in every detail); its life and movement; its salvation by Calvary; the new creature in Him and the new heavens and the new earth. Absolutely every conceivable situation is covered and fully understood; is prepared for and dealt with by Him. “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8.28). “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain” (Psalm 76.10).

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4.24). Now God as Spirit has no form, though He may manifest Himself in a form. Jesus Himself took on real manhood, flesh and blood, being born of a virgin. We must understand expressions about Christ and of His Father as picture language to help us understand. God is not a father as human men may be fathers. Christ was not the next generation son. But it is helpful to us to have picture language to help us understand the care of God and the relational attributes of God within the Trinity. The Saviour Himself taught us to say “Our Father which art in heaven” (Matthew 6.9) and constantly referred to Him as Father. The scriptures refer to Christ as the only-begotten, as for example, in John 1.18, “No man hath seen God t any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him”. So here in Proverbs, on the one hand we have the expression “I was set up from everlasting.” Now, it is exceedingly difficult for a finite mind to conceive everlastingness; more especially something that never began as opposed to something that will never end where “set up” gives us a sense of a fully established being. Though to our minds it might imply subjection, it is a truly helpful description (which God authorises, as it is scriptural). On the other hand in the expression “I was brought forth” it is probably not birth that is given to us in picture language but the showing forth, the revealing of the second person of the Godhead. Fountains, mountains and hills recognised him as existing before them, so that we read that “the wind and the sea obey him” (Mark 4.41) during His earthly ministry.

The Saviour has, from the time of the creation of the world, rejoiced in “the habitable part of the earth”. During His temptations He was, for a relatively short time, in the wilderness with the wild beasts (Mark 4.13). But His delights were (and are)

particularly with the sons of men, and seeing that the Father was delighted in Him the Saviour's delight in the sons of men is shared by the Father also. Notice that unlike the animal rights movement the Saviour puts people above the rest of creation.

The word "daily" occurs twice in this passage, at verses 30 & 34. The contrast is remarkable. On the one hand the Son experienced the Father's daily delight in Him. On the other hand, believers may experience the Son's daily delight in them as they watch daily to exercise His wisdom by consulting Him daily in every situation. It does not take long, if we neglect the opportunity of a daily audience with Christ (minimum), for we may continually resort unto Him (Psalm 71.3), to leave our first love (Revelation 2.4) and may fall under His displeasure inasmuch as He may say of us "I have somewhat against thee".