

## CHAPTER 18

**Ver. 1.** *Through desire a man having separated himself, seeketh*, etc.] Or, “a separated man seeketh desire”<sup>f513</sup>; his own desire, will, and pleasure. This is either to be understood in a good sense, of one that has a real and hearty desire after sound wisdom and knowledge, and seeks in the use of all proper means to attain it; and in order to which he separates himself from the world and the business of it, and retires to his study, and gives up himself to reading, meditation, and prayer; or goes abroad in search of it, as Aben Ezra: or of a vain man that affects singularity; and who, through a desire of gratifying that lust, separates himself, not only from God, as Jarchi interprets it, pursuing his evil imagination and the lust of his heart; and from his friends, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; but from all men, like the Jews, who “please not God, and are contrary to all men”; so such a man sets himself to despise and contradict the sentiments and opinions of others, and to set up his own in opposition to them. This is true of the Pharisees among the Jews, who had their name from separating themselves from all others, having an high opinion of their own Wisdom and sanctify; and also of the Gnostics among the Christians, who boasted of their knowledge, and separated themselves from the Christian assemblies; and were sensual, not having the Spirit, being vainly puffed up with their fleshly mind;

*[and] intermeddleth with all wisdom*; the man who is desirous of being truly wise and knowing grasps at all wisdom, every branch of useful knowledge; would gladly learn something of every art and science worthy of regard; and he makes use of all means of improving himself therein; and covets the company and conversation of men of wisdom and knowledge, that he may attain to more; he intermingles himself with men of wisdom, as Aben Ezra interprets it, and walks and converses with them. Or if this is to be understood of a vain glorious person, the sense is, “he intermeddles” or “mingles himself with all business”<sup>f514</sup>, as it may be rendered; he thrusts himself into affairs that do not concern him, and will pass his judgment on things he has nothing to do with; or he monopolizes all knowledge to himself, and will not allow any other to have any share with him. Jarchi interprets this clause thus,

“among wise men his reproach shall be made manifest;”

and observes, that their Rabbins explain it of Lot separating from Abraham, following the desires of his heart: but R. Saadiah Gaon better interprets it of an apostate from religion; that objects to everything solid and substantial, in a wrangling and contentious manner; and “shows his teeth”<sup>f515</sup> at it, as Schultens, from the use of the Arabic word, renders it.

**Ver. 2.** *A fool hath no delight in understanding*, etc.] In natural understanding, and in the improvement of his mind in it; he delights not in books, nor in the conversation of men of learning and sense: or in spiritual understanding, in the understanding of spiritual things; these are foolishness to a natural man; nor does he delight in reading the Scriptures, nor in hearing the word, and attendance on it in the house of God, but is weary of such exercises;

*but that his heart may discover itself*; and the folly that is in it: such men only desire to have some knowledge and understanding, to make a show of it, that they may be thought to be wise, and to be capable of talking of things as if they understood them, when it is only to the exposing of themselves and their ignorance; some persons attain to no more learning and knowledge than just to be capable to show that they are fools. Or, “but in the discovery of his heart”<sup>f516</sup>; he delights in discovering that; not the wisdom, but the folly that is in it.

**Ver. 3.** *When the wicked cometh, [then] cometh also contempt*, etc.] When he comes into the world, as Aben Ezra; as soon as he is born, he is liable to contempt, being born in sin; but this is true of all: rather, as the Vulgate Latin, and with which the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions agree, when he cometh into the depth of sin, or to the height of his wickedness; he commences a scoffer at, and condemner of all that is good: when he comes into the house of God, it may be said, “there comes contempt”; for he comes not to hear the word, in order to receive any profit by it, but to contemn it, and the ministers of it;

*and with ignominy reproach*: or, “with the ignominious man reproach”<sup>f517</sup>: he that despises all that is good, and treats divine things in a ludicrous way, will not spare to reproach the best of men, and speak evil of them falsely, for the sake of religion. Or the meaning of the whole is, that wicked men, sooner or later, come into contempt, ignominy, and reproach, themselves; they that despise the Lord are lightly esteemed by him; and a vile person is contemned in the eyes of a good man: such bring shame and disgrace upon themselves and families while they live; and, when they die, they are laid in

the grave with dishonour; an infamy rests upon their memories, and they wilt rise to everlasting shame and contempt.

**Ver. 4.** *The words of a man's mouth [are as] deep waters*, etc.] The words of a great and mighty man; of an excellent and valuable man, as Jarchi; or of a wise man, as Aben Ezra. The doctrines which such a man has imbibed, and his heart is full of and his mouth utters, are like to “waters”, pure, purifying, and refreshing; to “deep waters”, which make no noise, and cannot be easily fathomed: such are the deep mysteries of grace, the wisdom of God in a mystery, spoken among them that are perfect; of which a good man makes no boast, but humbly declares; out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth speaks;

*[and] the wellspring of wisdom [as] a flowing brook*; there is a spring of spiritual wisdom and knowledge in him; a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life; and from thence it flows freely and constantly; communicating itself liberally unto others, and ministering grace to the hearers, for their edification.

**Ver. 5.** *[It is] not good to accept the person of the wicked*, etc.] For a judge to have respect to a wicked man in a cause before him, and to favour him, because he is a rich man, or a relation, or he has received some kindness from him; none of these things should have any influence upon him

*to overthrow the righteous in judgment*: though he may be a poor man and a stranger, and to whom the judge is under no private and personal obligation; yet justice ought to be done without any respect to persons; to do otherwise is not only not good, but very bad, very sinful and criminal; it is contrary to law and justice; it is doing injury to men, and is repugnant to the will of God, and offensive to him, (<sup>489</sup>Leviticus 19:15).

**Ver. 6.** *A fool's lips enter into contention*, etc.] That is, between others, when he has nothing to do with it; but he must be meddling, and make himself a party in the contention, which is an argument of his folly; he says things which occasion disputes, raise contentions among men, and provoke to wrath and anger. The Septuagint version is, “the lips of a fool lead him to evils”: for, as they lead him to contention and strife, the issue of that is confusion and every evil work;

*and his mouth calleth for strokes*: as he stirs up and encourages contention, so he proceeds to blows, and excites others to them; from

words he goes to blows, and, by the ill and provoking language of his mouth, gets many a blow to himself. Jarchi seems to understand it of chastisement, from the hand of God; (see <sup><4125></sup>Proverbs 26:3).

**Ver. 7.** *A fool's mouth [is] his destruction*, etc.] The cause of it; for his contentions, and quarrels, and evil speaking, lawsuits are commenced against him, which bring ruin upon himself and his family now; as well as for his idle and wicked words he will be condemned hereafter, (<sup><4125></sup>Matthew 12:35); there is a world of iniquity in the mouth and tongue of a wicked man, which bring destruction upon himself and others, (<sup><3916></sup>James 3:6,8);

*and his lips [are] the snare of his soul*; from speaking in his own defence, he says things which should not be said, and by which he is entangled yet more and more; he is caught by his own words and condemned by them; or his loquacity, in which he delights, is a snare unto him to say things which neither become him, nor are for his advantage, but the contrary; (see <sup><4123></sup>Proverbs 12:13).

**Ver. 8.** *The words of a talebearer [are] as wounds*, etc.] Or rather they are wounds; they wound the credit and reputation of the person of whom the tale is told; they wound the person to whom it is told, and destroy his love and affection to his friend; and in the issue they wound, hurt, and ruin the talebearer himself. Or, they are “as of those that are wounded”<sup>f518</sup>; they pretend to be affected with the case they tell, and to be grieved for the failings and infirmities of those they are secretly exposing, when at the same time they rejoice at them: or, they are “secret” hidden ones, as Aben Ezra interprets it; they are spoken secretly, and wound secretly, in a backbiting way: or, they are “smooth” or flattering<sup>f519</sup>, as Kimchi; they are smoother than oil, and glide easily into the minds of others: rather, “are greedily swallowed down”<sup>f520</sup>, as the word in the Arabic language signifies; as Schultens has shown, and so renders it. Hence it follows:

*and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly*; go down pleasantly, and sink deep into the hearts of those to whom they are told; where they have a place and remain, both to the injury of the persons that receive them, and of them of whom they are told; and, though pleasing at first, they are as wounds in the inner parts, which are mortal.

**Ver. 9.** *He also that is slothful in his work*, etc.] Remiss in it; hangs down his hands, and does not care to make use of them, but neglects his business:

*is brother to him that is a great waster*: a prodigal man, who spends his substance in riotous living: the sluggard and the prodigal are brethren in iniquity; for, though they take different courses, they are both sinful, and issue in the same manner; both bring to poverty and want. Or, “brother to a master that wastes”<sup>f521</sup>; a slothful servant and a wasteful master are near akin, and come into the same class and circumstances. Jarchi interprets it,

“he that separateth from the law, though a disciple of a wise man, is a brother to Satan;”

whose name is Apollyon, the waster and destroyer. A man that is slothful in spiritual things, though a professor of religion, and has a place in the house of God, is brother to him that is a waster and persecutor of it; (see ~~4023~~ Matthew 12:30).

**Ver. 10.** *The name of the Lord [is] a strong tower*, etc.] By “the name of the Lord” may be meant, either the attributes and perfections of God, by which he is made known, and which are the strength and security of his people; his goodness, grace, and mercy, are their defence; his favour encompasses them about, as a shield; his justice protects them from all injuries and insults; his truth and faithfulness preserve them; they are kept by his power, as in a garrison; and his unchangeableness is a reason why they are not consumed: or else the Lord himself; his name is put for himself, (~~4300~~ Psalm 20:1); and may be well interpreted of the Messiah, as it is by the ancient Jew,<sup>f522</sup>; in and by whom God is manifested unto men as the God of grace; in whom he proclaims his name, a God gracious and merciful; whose name is in him, and who has the same nature and perfections with him; his name is Jehovah, our righteousness; Immanuel, God with us; the mighty God, and Prince of peace; and who is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins, and so is their security from eternal destruction. What a strong tower is to them that are within it, against an enemy without, that is the power, strength, and might of Christ to his people; as a divine Person, he is strong and mighty, the most mighty, the Almighty; as man, he is the man of God’s right hand, made strong for himself and us; as Mediator, he has all power in heaven and earth: in him is everlasting strength for his people; he is their Betzer, their fortified place, or city of refuge, to flee unto on all occasions; he is the strong hold,

whither prisoners of hope are directed to turn to; he is their place of defence, and the munition of rocks; a strong tower, inexpugnable; so deeply founded, no enemy can work under it; and plant a mine to blow it up; so highly built; no scaling ladders can reach it; so fortified, no cannon balls can break through it, or demolish any of its walls and bulwarks, which are his salvation; the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; it is not to be taken by storm, or by the most violent attack of the whole posse of men and devils;

*the righteous runneth into it*; not self-righteous persons, they run from Christ and his righteousness, not to him and that; but such who see their own righteousness will not justify them; who indeed are sinners, know and acknowledge themselves to be such; as sinners go to Christ, who, as such, receives them; and these are righteous through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and live soberly, righteously, and godly: and it is the continual business or employment of their faith to betake themselves to Christ upon all occasions; they are continually coming to him, and exercising faith upon him, as the Lord their righteousness, which is meant by “running” to him; this supposes knowledge of him, as the strong tower and city of refuge; of the way unto him, and of the reception by him which may be expected; it supposes a principle of spiritual life, and some degree of spiritual strength; a sense of danger or of want in themselves, and of safety and fulness in Christ; it is expressive of haste, readiness, and cheerfulness, and is owing to the drawings of efficacious grace;

*and* such an one that thus runs

*is safe*; from the avenging justice of God; from the curse and condemnation of the law; from sin, and all its dreadful consequences; from Satan, and all spiritual enemies; from wrath to come, hell, and the second death: or is “set aloft”<sup>f523</sup>; is on high; for this tower, as it is a strong one, it is a high one; a rock of refuge, higher than men, or angels, or heaven itself; and such who are in it are out of the reach of all danger and every enemy.

**Ver. 11.** *The rich man’s wealth [is] his strong city*, etc.] In which he dwells, over which he presides; in which he places his trust and confidence, and thinks himself safe from every enemy and from all trouble: as one<sup>f524</sup> observes,

“the abundance of a rich man’s wealth he conceives to be as it were the abundance of people in a “city”; the telling of his money he

imagines to be the walking of people up and down the streets; his bags standing thick together to be so many houses standing close one to the other; his iron barred chests to be so many bulwarks; his bonds and bills to be his cannons and demi-cannons, his great ordinance; and in the midst of these he thinketh himself environed with a “great wall”, which no trouble is able to leap over, which no misery is able to break through.”

As it follows;

*and as a high wall in his own conceit*: which not only separates and distinguishes him from others; but, as he imagines, will secure him from all dangers, and will be abiding, lasting, and durable: but all this is only “in his own conceit”, or “imagery”<sup>f525</sup>; in the chambers of his imagery, as Jarchi, referring to (<sup><3182></sup>Ezekiel 8:12); where the same word is used; for this wall shall not stand; these riches cannot secure themselves, they take wing and fly away; and much less the owner of them, not from public calamities, nor from personal diseases of body, nor from death, nor from wrath to come.

**Ver. 12.** *Before destruction the heart of man is haughty*, etc.] Lifted up with his riches. Rich men are apt to be highminded, and therefore are to be charged and cautioned against it; they are apt to look above their poor neighbours, and with contempt upon them; and very often this haughtiness of theirs is a presage of their ruin and destruction: and those haughty airs are put on from the pride of their hearts, when a “breach” is near, as the word<sup>f526</sup> signifies, or when they are ready to break; however, their haughty spirits are, sooner or later, humbled by one distressing providence or another; (see <sup><3168></sup>Proverbs 16:18);

*and before honour [is] humility*; (see Gill on “<sup><3153></sup>Proverbs 15:33”).

**Ver. 13.** *He that answereth a matter before he heareth [it]*, etc.] Who is impatient, and cannot wait to hear it out, but breaks in upon the speaker before he has finished what he has to say; or is rash and precipitate, and returns an answer at once, without weighing and considering, and thoroughly understanding, what is said:

*it [is] folly and shame unto him*; his answer must be a foolish one, and bring shame and confusion upon him; men should be “swift to hear”, and “slow to speak”, (<sup><3009></sup>James 1:9).

**Ver. 14.** *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity*, etc.] The spirit of a mighty man, as Jarchi; a man of spirit, that has a spirit of fortitude, even of natural fortitude, and especially of Christian fortitude; that has a spirit of might upon him, of power, and sound mind; a man of a Christian spirit, that is renewed in the spirit of his mind; who is a spiritual man, and has the Spirit of God in him, as well as a rational soul, an immaterial, immortal, and never dying substance. Such a man will bear up under many trials and exercises of life; will support under bodily infirmities; will take patiently the loss Of friends and of substance; endure reproach, and the loss of a good name, credit, and reputation, cheerfully, for righteousness's sake; and suffer persecution for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel, with an undaunted and unbroken spirit: the peace of conscience he feels within; the presence of God with him; the love of God shed abroad in his heart; seeing all his afflictions flowing from love, and working for his good; and having in view the glories of another world; he bears up under and goes through all afflictions with ease and pleasure; his conscience is clear, his heart is whole, his mind is easy; his wounds being healed, his sins pardoned, and his soul saved in Chris;

*but a wounded spirit who can bear?* or a “smitten”<sup>f527</sup> one, smitten by the Lord; by the word of the Lord, which he uses as a hammer to break rocky hearts in pieces; by the law of God, which produces wrath, and a looking for of fiery indignation; by the Spirit of God, awakening the conscience, and convicting it of sin, righteousness, and judgment; which smitings are very grievous, though they tend to bring to repentance; are in order to healing, and are in love. Or, “a broken spirit”<sup>f528</sup>, as in (<sup>172</sup>Proverbs 17:22); broken with a sense of sin, and with an excess of sorrow for it; when a man becomes lifeless and hopeless, has no hope of life and salvation, and is in the utmost confusion; all his measures and purposes are broken, as well as his heart; he knows not what to do, nor what way to take; he is disconsolate, and refuses to be comforted; and which for the present is intolerable: though the Lord has a regard to such, is nigh unto them; has sent his son to bind up their broken hearts; yea, has himself been broken for them; and happy it is for them that they fall on him and are broken, and not he on them. Or, “a wounded spirit”; with a view of sin, as committed against the omniscient and omnipotent Being, a pure and holy God; a righteous one, whose nature is infinite; and so sin committed against him requires an infinite satisfaction, which a creature cannot give; and a God also, who is the author of their beings, and the Father of their mercies; all



which makes sin against him the more cutting and wounding: likewise they are wounded with a view of the evil nature of sin, and the aggravated circumstances that attend it; and with the terrors of the law, that are set in array against them. And such a spirit “who can bear?” not without the sight of a wounded Saviour; or without a view of atonement by his sacrifice; or without the discoveries and applications of pardoning grace; or without a sense of peace and reconciliation made by the blood of Christ; or without some hope of salvation by him; and unless the good Samaritan pours in oil and wine into the wounds, and binds them up.

**Ver. 15.** *The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge*, etc.] More knowledge; for he must have some, and a considerable share, to be denominated “prudent”, whether in things natural, civil, or spiritual: and such will be heartily desirous of more, and make use of all means to attain it, by which they do come at a large share of it;

*and the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge*; a wise man seeks to get it by hearing; he listens to what others say, and especially such that are wiser and more knowing than himself: so such as are wise to salvation, as they desire to know more of Christ and of divine things, and make use of all means for that purpose; among the rest, hearken to what Christians, of a superior class to themselves, drop in private conversation; and particularly they constantly attend to the ministry of the word; and thus seeking it, they find an increase of it.

**Ver. 16.** *A man’s gift maketh room for him*, etc.] Or “enlarges him”<sup>f529</sup>; brings him out of prison, or, or out of straits and difficulties with which he, has, been pressed; or it makes way for him to a judge, and for a favourable hearing of his cause; or it enlarges his acquaintance, and gains him respect among men;

*and bringeth him before great men*; it opens a way for him into the presence and company of great men, being a fee to their servants; or with it he procures a place to wait on them. It is not necessary to understand it of a gift by way of bribe; but to introduce a person to another, and render him acceptable, and appease anger; as in the cases of Jacob and Abigail, (<sup>(-0320)</sup>Genesis 32:20 43:11 <sup>(-0327)</sup>1 Samuel 25:27).

**Ver. 17.** *He that is first in his own cause [seemeth] just*, etc.] As perhaps Tertullus did, before Paul made his defence; and as Ziba, Mephibosheth’s servant, before his master detected him: this often appears true in telling a

tale, in private conversation, in lawsuits before a judge and a court of judicature, and in theological controversies;

*but his neighbour cometh, and searcheth him*; his neighbour comes into the house, where he is telling his tale, and reports it in another manner, and shows the falsehood of his relation; or he comes into a court of judicature, and sets the cause in quite another light; or he comes out into the world by public writing, and exposes the errors of a man engaged in a wrong cause, and refutes his arguments. It is generally understood of judicial affairs, that the first that opens a cause is very apt to prejudice the judge and court in his favour, and they are ready to think at first hearing that he is in the right; but it is not proper to be hasty in forming a judgment till the other side is heard; for his antagonist comes and traverses the point, unravels the whole affair, shows the weakness of his cause, the vanity of his pretences, and makes void all his allegations; and then “he”, the judge, so some interpret it, “searcheth”; inquires more narrowly into the case, in order to find out truth, and pass a right judgment and sentence.

**Ver. 18.** *The lot causeth contentions to cease*, etc.] When a case cannot be determined among parties at variance in a private way, nor in a court of judicature, the lot is cast, and that puts an end to all strife, and makes each party easy; they submit to it, and acquiesce in it;

*and parteth between the mighty*; the kings and princes of the earth; men of great power and authority, and of great riches and affluence; and so in a capacity of contending with each other, and of prolonging the contention, which may be attended with bad consequences; and who are not easily dissuaded from it: or it may intend such who most vehemently disagree; persons of great spirits, who are obstinate and stubborn, and will by no means yield, and there is no parting them by arguments or legal decisions; these the lot parts, and causes them to cease from their quarrels and contentions, and to rest satisfied with the distributions the lot makes to them; as the children of Israel were with their portion of the land of Canaan, assigned them by lot.

**Ver. 19.** *A brother offended [is harder to be won] than a strong city*, etc.] A fortified city may sooner be taken by an enemy, than one brother offended can be reconciled to another; their resentments against each other are keener than against another person that has offended them; and their love being turned into hatred, it is more bitter; and it is more difficult to compose differences between brethren than between enemies; wherefore

such should take care that they fall not out by the way: this is true of brethren in a natural sense; as the cases of Abel and Cain, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brethren, Amnon and Absalom, and others, show; and of brethren in a spiritual sense, as Paul and Barnabas, Luther and Calvin, and others;

*and [their] contentions [are] like the bars of a castle:* which cannot be easily broken or cut asunder: so contentions, especially those among brethren, are with great difficulty made to cease, and their differences composed; they will stand it out against one another as long as a strong city, or a barred castle, against an enemy.

**Ver. 20.** *A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth,* etc.] With his own words and discourses, when they are prudent, pious, and savoury; when they are with grace, and minister it; they are satisfying to himself, to his own mind and conscience, and to his family; to all within his house, which is, as it were, his belly; but, if otherwise, it will not be profitable nor satisfying to either; and therefore, if a man would keep conscience easy, and be useful to others, he ought to take care what he says; (see <sup><0214></sup>Proverbs 12:14 13:2);

*[and] with the increase of his lips shall he be filled;* the same thing as before, expressed in different words, alluding to the sowing, of seed in the earth, and the increase of it; as a man sows he reaps, and enjoys the fruits of his labour; according to what a man sows with his lips, such is his harvest he is afterwards a partaker of.

**Ver. 21.** *Death and life [are] in the power of the tongue,* etc.] Of witnesses, according to the testimony they bear; of judges, according to the sentence they pass; of teachers, according to the doctrine they preach; of all men, who, by their well or ill speaking, bring death or life to themselves and others. Some, by their tongues, by the too free use of them, or falsehood they utter, are the cause of death to themselves and others; and some, by their silence, or by their prudent speech and prevalent intercession, secure or obtain life for themselves and others; yea, judgment at the last day will proceed according to a man's words, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned", (<sup><0237></sup>Matthew 12:37); the tongue is the instrument either of a great deal of good, or of a great deal of evil;

*and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof*; that delight to be talkative; that love to use the tongue, whether in a good or in a bad way, shall accordingly be recompensed; shall enjoy the advantages or disadvantages arising from it.

**Ver. 22.** [*Whoso findeth a wife*, etc.] A good one; so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, supply it; and so the Targum, though it leaves out the word good in the last clause; and no other can be meant, even a good natured one, wise, prudent, careful, and industrious; a proper helpmeet, a virtuous woman, as in (<sup>אביו</sup> Proverbs 31:10); whoso seeks after such an one, and finds one, especially one that has the grace of God, which he should seek after among his friends, and by their assistance, and by prayer to God:

*findeth a good [thing]*; that will be good for him, both upon a civil and spiritual account; the Septuagint version adds,

“he that casts out a good wife casts out good things, but he that retains a whore is foolish and ungodly;”

which is followed by the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, but is not in the Hebrew text. Jarchi interprets it of the law in a mystic sense, but, according to the literal sense, of a good wife;

*and obtaineth favour of the Lord*; it is from the Lord, and under his direction and guidance in seeking, that he finds a good wife; and which he ought to esteem as a favour from the Lord, and as an evidence of his favour to him, and may encourage himself to hope for others of him<sup>f530</sup> Hesiod says, a man cannot obtain anything better than a good wife.

**Ver. 23.** *The poor useth entreaties*, etc.] Or “supplications”<sup>f531</sup>; he is an humble supplicant to others for favours he asks in a submissive and lowly manner; he does not demand anything, nor prescribe what shall be done for him, but modestly tells his case, and submits it; so such who are poor in spirit are humble supplicants at the throne of grace;

*but the rich answereth roughly*; being proud and haughty, lifted up with their riches, and in fear of none, they answer others with hard and rough words, especially their inferiors, and particularly the poor. This is not what ought to be, but what commonly is. This verse and (<sup>אביו</sup> Proverbs 18:24) are not in the Arabic version.

**Ver. 24.** *A man [that hath] friends must show himself friendly, etc.]*

Friendship ought to be mutual and reciprocal, as between David and Jonathan; a man that receives friendship ought to return it, or otherwise he is guilty of great ingratitude. This may be spiritually applied; a believer is “a man of friends”<sup>f532</sup>, as it may be rendered; he has many friends: God is his friend, as appears by his early love to him, his choice of him, and provisions of grace for him; by sending his son to save him; by visiting him, not only in a way of providence, but of grace; by disclosing his secrets, showing his covenant to him, and by making him his heir, and a joint heir with Christ. Christ is his friend, as is evident from his visiting him at his incarnation; and in a spiritual way, by the communication of his secrets to him; by his hearty counsel and faithful reproofs; by his undertaking and doing for him what he has; and especially by suffering and dying in his room and stead. The Holy Spirit is his friend, which he has shown by discovering to him his woeful estate by nature, and the way of salvation by Christ; by working all his works in him; by acting the part of a Comforter to him; by revealing divine things to him, by helping him under all his infirmities; by making intercession for him according to the will of God; and by making him meet for eternal glory and happiness: angels are his friends, as is plain by their well pleasedness with the incarnation of Christ for men; and which they express at their conversion; by their ministering to them, their protection of them, and the good offices they do them both in life and at death; and saints are friends to one another: and such should show themselves friendly to God, their covenant God and Father; by frequently visiting him at the throne of grace; by trusting in him; by a carefulness not to offend, but please him; and by a close and faithful adherence to his cause and interest: to Jesus Christ their Redeemer, by a ready obedience to his commands; by owning and using him as their friend; by taking notice of his friends, and showing them respect, his ministers and poor saints; by cleaving to him, and renouncing the friendship of his enemies: and likewise to the Holy Spirit, by not grieving, quenching, and despising him; but by making use of him, and giving up themselves to his influence and direction; and by acknowledging him as the author of all their grace: also to angels, by speaking well of them, owning their good offices, and reckoning it an honour that they are come and joined to such a company; and to the saints, by Christian conversation with them, by sympathizing with them in all conditions, by hearty counsel, faithful reproofs and admonitions, and by helping them in every distress, inward and outward;

*and there is a friend [that] sticketh closer than a brother*; who is to a man as his own soul, (<sup>f533</sup>Deuteronomy 13:6); and so are of one heart and soul, as Jonathan and David, and the first Christians, were; this is true of Christ, and may be expressive of the close union between him and his people; and of his close adherence to their cause and interest; and of his constancy and continuance as a friend at all times; and of his faithfulness and unchangeableness as such; (see <sup>f533</sup>Proverbs 17:17). The Heathens had a deity which presided over friendship, which they called Jupiter Philios<sup>f533</sup>: the character best agrees with the true God, who is a friend to men himself, and loves friendship among them.