**CHAPTER** **37**

*Of the choice of friends and counsellors.*

**1** Every friend will say: I also am his friend: but there is a friend, that is only a friend in name. Is not this a grief even to death?

**2** But a companion and a friend shall be turned to an enemy.

**3** O wicked presumption, whence camest thou to cover the earth with thy malice, and deceitfulness?

**4** There is a companion who rejoiceth with his friend in his joys, but in the time of trouble, he will be against him.

**5** There is a companion who condoleth with his friend for his belly’s sake, and he will take up a shield against the enemy.

**6** Forget not thy friend in thy mind, and be not unmindful of him in thy riches.

**7** Consult not with him that layeth a snare for thee, and hide thy counsel from them that envy thee.

**8** Every counsellor giveth out counsel, but there is one that is a counsellor for himself.

**9** Beware of a counsellor. And know before what need he hath: for he will devise to his own mind:

**10** Lest he thrust a stake into the ground, and say to thee:

**11** Thy way is good; and then stand on the other side to see what shall befall thee.

**12** Treat not with a man without religion concerning holiness, nor with an unjust man concerning justice, nor with a woman touching her of whom she is jealous, nor with a coward concerning war, nor with a merchant about traffic, nor with a buyer of selling, nor with an envious man of giving thanks,

**13** Nor with the ungodly of piety, nor with the dishonest of honesty, nor with the field laborer of every work,

**14** Nor with him that worketh by the year of the finishing of the year, nor with an idle servant of much business: give no heed to these in any matter of counsel.

**15** But be continually with a holy man, whomsoever thou shalt know to observe the fear of God,

**16** Whose soul is according to thy own soul: and who, when thou shalt stumble in the dark, will be sorry for thee.

**17** And establish within thyself a heart of good counsel: for there is no other thing of more worth to thee than it.

**18** The soul of a holy man discovereth sometimes true things, more than seven watchmen that sit in a high place to watch.

**19** But above all these things pray to the most High, that he may direct thy way in truth.

**20** In all thy works let the true word go before thee, and steady counsel before every action.

**21** A wicked word shall change the heart: out of which four manner of things arise, good and evil, life and death: and the tongue is continually the ruler of them. There is a man that is subtle and a teacher of many, and yet is unprofitable to his own soul.

**22** A skilful man hath taught many, and is sweet to his own soul.

**23** He that speaketh sophistically, is hateful: he shall be destitute of every thing.

**24** Grace is not given him from the Lord: for he is deprived of all wisdom.

**25** There is a wise man that is wise to his own soul: and the fruit of his understanding is commendable.

**26** A wise man instructeth his own people, and the fruits of his understanding are faithful.

**27** A wise man shall be filled with blessings, and they that see shall praise him.

**28** The life of a man is in the number of his days: but the days of Israel are innumerable.

**29** A wise man shall inherit honour among his people, and his name shall live for ever.

**30** My son, prove thy soul in thy life: and if it be wicked, give it no power:

**31** For all things are not expedient for all, and every kind pleaseth not every soul.

**32** Be not greedy in any feasting, and pour not out thyself upon any meat:

**33** For in many meats there will be sickness, and greediness will turn to choler.

**34** By surfeiting many have perished: but he that is temperate, shall prolong life.