“***Friends of God***” by S. Finlan. The First Church, Nov. 15, 2020

**Wisdom of Solomon 7:15, 22–23, 27**

15 May God grant me to speak with judgment, and to have thoughts worthy of what I have received; for he is the guide even of wisdom and the corrector of the wise. . . . 22There is in wisdom a spirit that is intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, clear, unpolluted, distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen, irresistible, 23beneficent, humane, steadfast, sure, free from anxiety, all-powerful, overseeing all, and penetrating through all spirits that are intelligent, pure, and altogether subtle. . . . 27in every generation she passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God, and prophets.

There are several high points in this passage. I like the notion of God as the corrector of the wise (v. 15). The wise need help, too. Just because they are wise, that does not mean they are perfect.

When we are faced with social difficulties, it is not easy to be unanxious. When people around us are anxious, as when they are angry or frightened, it tends to affect us. It takes a strong mind to resist the emotional atmosphere. But if we are motivated by love, we will be emotionally devoted to embracing these Godly values. Our energy will overcome negative energies around us. Godliness will become our passion. When God and humans are united, nothing is impossible.

This passage tells us that the spirit that is in Wisdom is divine: it is intelligent, holy, unique, invulnerable; also that Wisdom is moral: it is unpolluted, loving the good, beneficent, humane. And it has perfection and power: is steadfast, free from anxiety, all-powerful, overseeing all. It is comforting to read that Wisdom is divine, moral, and powerful, and penetrates all intelligent spirits. She “passes into holy souls and makes them friends of God” (v. 27).

“Friend of God” was a nickname that Abraham earned because of being on intimate terms with God. So we can become like another Abraham. What is envisaged is a lively and rewarding relationship with God, being continually taught by God and corrected. One takes on the unanxious, beneficent, clear, and unpolluted characteristics of Wisdom.

Of course, it can be difficult to always be free of anxiety. It may be hard to be beneficent, clear, or holy. But we can make these our goals, and pray for help in achieving them. Jesus can give us rest, when we need rest, and power, when we need power.

Let us put an effort into understanding other people, so that compassion doesn’t grow cold in unsettled times. In *these* times, we need to have spiritual energy. Pray fervently for God’s help. And try not to be overwhelmed with guilt when you fall short of your ideals. God is forgiving of his dear children, and welcomes us back on board. It is understandable that we will sometimes fall short, and will sometimes become anxious. But we can recover our faith and confidence by recognizing that God takes the long view. If *we* take the long view, we need not be dismayed by anything. Our faith will be strengthened by our experiences of growing in God’s love and mercy. And we gain confidence if we believe in the certainty that Jesus will *triumph*. The kingdom of God *will* prevail; there *will* be justice and peace in the long run, even on this earth. God, after all, is the master planner, and works with us as we go forward, drawing ever closer to perfection. God is working on us all the time.