



"CHRIST'S FRIENDSHIP: ITS INTIMACY"

*Jesus said: "No longer do I call you servants;
for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth:
but I have called you friends;
for all things that I heard from My Father,
I have made known unto you." John 15:15*

The highest proof of true friendship, and one great source of its blessedness, is the intimacy that holds nothing back, and admits the friend to share our inmost secrets.

It is a blessed thing to be Christ's servant—His redeemed ones delight to call themselves His slaves. Christ had often spoken of the disciples as His servants. In His great love our Lord now says: *"No longer do I call you servants"*—with the coming of the Holy Spirit a new era was to be inaugurated.

"The servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth"—he has to obey without being consulted or admitted into the secret of all his master's plans. *"But, I have called you friends, for all things I heard from my Father I have made known unto you."* Christ's friends share with Him in all the secrets the Father has entrusted to Him.

Let us think what this means. When Christ spoke of keeping His Father's commandments, He did not mean merely what was written in Holy Scripture, but those special commandments which were communicated to Him day by day, and from hour to hour. It was of these He said: *"The Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that He doeth, and He will show Him greater things."* All that Christ did was God's working. God showed it to Christ, so that He carried out the Father's will and purpose, not, as man often does, blindly and unintelligently, but with full understanding and approval. As one who stood in God's counsel, He knew God's plan.

And this now is the blessedness of being Christ's friends, that we do not, as servants, do His will without much spiritual insight into its meaning

and aim, but are admitted, as an inner circle, into some knowledge of God's more secret thoughts.

From the Day of Pentecost on, by the Holy Spirit, Christ was to lead His disciples into the spiritual apprehension of the mysteries of the kingdom, of which He had hitherto spoken only by parables.

Friendship delights in fellowship. Friends hold council. Friends dare trust to each other with what they would not for anything have others know.

What is it that gives a Christian access to this holy intimacy with Jesus? What gives him the spiritual capacity for receiving the communications Christ has to make of what the Father has shown Him? *"Ye are my friends if ye do what I command you."* It is loving obedience that purifies the soul. That refers not only to the commandments of the Word, but to that blessed application of the Word to our daily life, which none but our Lord Himself can give. But as these are waited for in dependence and humility, and faithfully obeyed, the soul becomes fitted for ever closer fellowship, and the daily life may become a continual experience: *"I have called you friends; for all things I have heard from my Father, I have made known unto you."*

I have called you friends. What an unspeakable honor! What a heavenly privilege! O Saviour, speak the word with power into my soul: *"I have called you My friend, whom I love, whom I trust, to whom I make known all that passes between my Father and Me."*

