

RELIGION AS FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

soul needed, though many centuries elapsed before this dim longing became articulate. A saint of our own era has worded it for all time, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee."

There was much of groping and many partial conceptions before men were ready for this great thought. Look at the sacrifices of the Jewish church. How much difficulty we have had in grasping their significance and in relating them to our own lives. We have often wondered how God could have countenanced such things, and what real religious value they could have had. But looking at religion as friendship with God it all becomes plain. The earliest sacrifices were looked upon as a meal with the gods, in which the worshipper and his God met as friend meets friend in the eating of a meal. When Jehovah set apart Israel for His chosen people He said to them in effect, "I will meet with you as friend with friend, and we will have communion together in this sacrificial meal." What He wanted was not the meal or the sacrifice offered to Him, but the friendship, the heart fellowship of His people. But they erred as