

« They must remember how our father Abraham was made the *friend* of God. » ( Judith viii. ) « Such is my beloved and he is my *friend*, O ye daughters of Jerusalem. » ( Canticle v. ) « The seed of Abraham my *friend*. » ( Is. xii. ) « But to me Thy *friends*, O God. . . » ( Ps. cxxxviii. ) « Behold thou art fair O my *love*. . . Arise, make haste, my *love*. . . My *beloved* to me and I to him. . . How beautiful thou art, my *love*. . . » etc., etc. ( Canticle. )

Before his fall, Solomon spoke in glowing terms on the beauty of divine friendship : « And I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. I loved her above health and beauty. . . For she is an infinite treasure to men : which they that use, become the *friends* of God, » etc. ( Wisdom vii. ) Therefore, I must doubt no longer : my heart's consolation in this land of exile will be its friendship with God.

But does friendship not suppose equality of condition, that both friends belong to the same class of society ? . . and how great the distance separating me from Jesus ! I am but a miserable worm and He is the God of all splendor : . Yes, the many different social standings constitute so many barriers to the formation and existence of friendship between people. Man is too proud to lower himself to a level with what he calls « his inferior, » and his love is so frail, so egotistic, that too many divisions would weaken and kill it : and how could he think of enjoying friendship's charms outside the narrow circle of his selfishness ?

Yet, the love of Jesus knows no such obstacles. Nothing can prevent Him from descending to the lowest of men to tender a helping hand and call him « Friend. » He is infinitely great and fears no abasement, because He loses nothing thereby. Everyone knows that it is a loveable condescension which inclines Him to man. I may then be assured that He will never be ashamed to consider me as His friend ; and the lower, the more degraded I am, the more the rich of this world despise me, the stronger the claim I have to the Friendship of Him who said : « Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God. ( Marc. x. )

