

« 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.)

