

RELIGION AS FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

tery." What is that but another way of saying, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." But we have been so blind to all this loving wooing of God that we have looked upon Him as a hard taskmaster or an indulgent convenience to step in and deliver us from the pains of hell or the results of sin.

There is much that is stern in the Bible, but so there is in all real friendship. We cannot admit to the sanctity of our friendship a man who is coarse and rude. He will mistake kindness for weakness and sternness for harsh temper. He must be kept at arm's length till his character is such that he can sympathize with and appreciate ours. So with our God. What a long, hard discipline He has had to put us through before we are ready for this sacred opportunity of friendship with Him.

Think of what it means. Friendship with God. With all the closeness of our nearest and dearest earthly friend, God is our friend. If we truly love any one, how we long to have him think well of us, how we bend our every energy to be worthy of his respect and his affection. What an incentive, then, ought this to be to