

But we should here, perhaps, be rudely awakened from our daydream by the reflection that such a friend as this is an impossibility. Who could unite in himself so many excellencies? Why, our share in Adam's heritage is so large that even our virtues are often unattractive. We are so often vanquished in the daily battle with our own selfishness that constant generosity is rare. Perfect sympathy is quite as scarce, for who can enter so fully into another's varying moods and difficulties as to thoroughly understand all and so pardon all? Passion and prejudice so often warp the judgment, even of the wisest, that we cannot always follow their counsel. Then, how powerless, as a rule, are our dearest friends to lessen our griefs and lighten our burdens! Are we not generally forced to be content with their expressed desire to do so, and to take the will for the deed?

Nevertheless, there is one perfect Friend. There is really living in the world to day one whose character is a full harmony of all the qualities we would give our ideal friend. His holiness, for instance, is so peerless that no stain of sin ever touched His soul. He is so amiable and winning that He draws to Himself all men; so generous that to gain and keep His friends He has made most costly sacrifices; so wise that the heart of man and all things else are perfectly known to Him. From this deep knowledge is born a sympathy that can feel for every human care and sorrow, for He Himself has experienced them all; but, more wonderful still, He is always able and always willing to meet every need of the soul and to satisfy the vaguest longings of our hearts.

Surely, all have now guessed who this perfect Friend must be; it is Jesus our Saviour, true God of true God, indeed, yet no less truly the gracious Son of Mary "But centuries have passed," you may say, "since Jesus walked the earth in the guise of man. Had I been living then in Judea I might have had Him for a friend. How hard I would have striven to gain His Friendship! Would that He were living now!" Take comfort, for He is living now, and you can easily become His friend.